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VOLUME III, NUMBER 4 OCTOBER, 1942

IMAGERY AND LOGIC: RAMUS AND METAPHYSICAL POETICS

BY ROSEMOND TUVE

I

Imagery has been more talked about than analyzed. For no other major element in poetic composition is there such a paucity even of terminology, of critical vocabulary with which to make the distinctions that need to be made. Lack of agreement as to what images do has not kept us from treating them as data for scientifically precise generalizations: images have been counted, they have been classified. Nor has it kept us from regarding them as though they were instruments for making valid aesthetic discriminations between poets or schools. But they have proved what they have been used to prove with the gracious compliance of the undefined. As a critical weapon the criterion of imagery has been sharpened by each century or each critic at his own grindstone.

Those familiar with present-day criticism of Renaissance and metaphysical poetry will recognize the important part played, in recent condemnation and predilections, by certain approaches to imagery which I shall indicate and challenge. What seem to me confusions in this criticism result chiefly from unexamined assumptions with regard to two fundamental points: (1) what constitute the distinguishing features of images, and (2) what factors operate to make images differ from poet to poet. This paper will, therefore, first discuss a basis upon which different kinds of images may be distinguished from and compared with one another—a basis valid for any period, but presented here in terms of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century imagery. It will then attempt to examine one factor (and I believe the most important) which helped to determine the way imagery differs from poet to poet—one type of *function* for imagery, recognized in Renaissance theory and present throughout the practice of the period. Since this study is in part a protest against as well as an attempt to uncover assumptions which have obscured our whole treatment of imagery, I shall briefly outline the confusions or indecisions with regard to the two

fundamental points mentioned, as they have affected approaches to imagery in current criticism of this period.

Criticism has not been concerned to determine exactly the feature by which different types of imagery may most fruitfully be distinguished. Over-emphasis upon the factor of an author's personality in studying the character of his images, as well as misinterpretations concerning the "decorative" aspects of Elizabethan imagery, have come from looking at the area whence the terms of an image are drawn (science, domestic life, etc.) rather than at its logical function, simple or complex, which is here postulated as the most characteristic factor in an image. The student of imagery is likely to assume answers to many questions in terms of his own theory of poetry, and without ever posing them. What, for instance, is the "cause" of the choice of an image, in terms of which it can be distinguished from others? Since the Romantic period, imagery has by many been accepted as an author's chief means of making his work sensuously convincing, of conveying his experience with a semblance of reality. But we may find, in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writing at least, most images are not primarily sensuous experiences. They did not arise that way, and we do not thus apprehend them; when an author makes a comparison we follow him in a logical step, we perceive not a thing but a relationship, we are called on for a response far less perceptual than conceptual. If the core of an image, the "cause" of its choice and the reason for which it was used, be this logical linkage (a point made especially clear in the sixteenth-century logician's treatment of similitudes), then here is where we must focus our attention. Such a reconsideration of *what an image does* affects not only our judgment of single images, but our whole conception of the second point mentioned—of why different poets need to use different kinds. When the character of imagery varies from poem to poem, as of course it clearly does, we may successfully discover what makes it do so only if our comparisons of one image with another are made in terms of the basic purposes they were intended to serve.

Much recent criticism of the poetry and poetics of this period, and much recent study of imagery,[1] has been based upon the almost

[1] These statements of the problems involved (including that of the nature of metaphor) and of the theories adduced by modern critics especially of metaphysical

tacit acceptance of two different answers to this question of what makes images differ from poet to poet. Criticism frequently proceeds upon both assumptions at once. I shall indicate them summarily. There are others, but these two have been in recent years most used and least questioned: therefore, I shall pose them as questions. The paper as a whole will constitute a partial answer.

First, did the poet choose images primarily for *their content*, because of interest in the area whence the terms of the image were drawn? If so, was this in response to some personal urge toward certain areas and contents, so that difference in personality would be the variable? A practice now growing in favor is to draw certain conclusions about the interests and personality of a poet by surveying the content of his images—the matters he goes to most often for comparisons. This looks reasonable. It may be very unsafe—especially when we begin to see where the premises would really lead us. If we find significant the fact that the metaphysical poets frequently use images drawn from homely objects, or from natural science, or from metals, we are also obliged to assume significance when we find the animal kingdom, say, drawn upon by Daniel, still chased by his own thoughts like hounds (*Delia* 5), by Davies in comparing Elizabeth's court dancing to the rare weaving work of silkworms' industry, by Spenser lacking his love, seeking from place to place like a young fawn (*Amor.* 78), by T. S. Eliot watching the yellow smoke rub its muzzle and lick its tongue into the corners of the evening. The trouble with fishes is that they are

imagery, are of necessity most summary and incomplete. In this shortened treatment I cannot argue by chapter and verse, but will recall to the reader's mind the books of chief importance and influence. One list is headed by C. F. E. Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us* (Cambridge, 1939), and should include Henry Wells, *Poetic Imagery* (N. Y., 1924) and M. Rugoff, *Donne's Imagery* (N. Y., 1939). For another type of approach T. S. Eliot is the usual influence (though later writers have been led to more crass statement); see *Selected Essays,* 1917–32 (N. Y., 1932); the barest list must include G. Williamson, *The Donne Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass., 1930); Allen Tate, *Reactionary Essays* (N. Y., 1936); Cleanth Brooks, *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* (Chapel Hill, 1939); Wm. Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (London, 1930); F. R. Leavis, *Revaluation,* and (ed.) *Determinations* (London, 1936, 1934); R. L. Sharp, *From Donne to Dryden* (Chapel Hill, 1940); C. Day Lewis, *A Hope for Poetry* (Oxford, 1935); T. Spencer, ed., *A Garland for John Donne* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931). Fugitive criticism by Yeats, T. E. Hulme, R. P. Blackmur and Herbert Read has been influential, and may be found with others in the bibliography by T. Spencer and M. van Doren, *Studies in Metaphysical Poetry* (N. Y., 1939).

in every ocean. If there were a hound in every line of T. S. Eliot it would not relate him any more nearly to the Elizabethan sonneteers. If Donne's drawing upon heavenly phenomena for imagery shows something about his personality, either we must be so careful about our classifications that virtually no image may be grouped with any other, or we may be embarrassed to find that the *Faerie Queene* shows similar things about another very different personality.

Or, secondly, did the kinds of *matters* he might "yoke together" govern the poet's choice of images? his choice of *matters* constituting evidence of his poetics? (in the Elizabethans "poetic" matters, in the metaphysical poets, "occult resemblances" found in unpoetic matters so that wit results, or ironic comment). Is the variable thus—as we are told in much, indeed most, modern criticism—a poet's willingness or unwillingness to admit into his poetry objects or matters which we three hundred years later define as "decorative" or "dissonant" or "poetic" to him? In that case, we must think that Spenser's comparison of Britomart's love to a "hidden hooke . . . infixed . . . Within my bleeding bowels," rankling "That all mine entrailes flow with poysnous gore," a running sore, an ulcer (III, ii, 39), is evidence that he at moments attained that "unification of sensibility," that willingness to "amalgamate disparate experience," with which Donne is so often credited. Both could see Love "subtilly catch'd, as a disease" (Donne, *Elegy* XV); does willingness to admit such shocking juxtapositions constitute evidence, in either man, of a theory of poetry widely current since the Symbolists—the primary interest in the dis-covering of the associative complexities of the artist's experience or consciousness? *By virtue of his images,* this primary interest (and hence the theory of poetry it presupposes, though that is not always recognized) is with increasing firmness attributed to Donne. Suppose we are to grant the modern answer to Dr. Johnson's ridicule of Donne's image, in *A Valediction: of weeping,* of the round ball made by the workman into a geographer's globe—first likened to a lover's tear, then the flow of the loved one's tears likened to the deluge, drowning that world in waters dissolved from his weeping heaven. The currently received answer to Dr. Johnson is to see Donne's image as the result of rich associations, thronging up from various levels of experience and ad-

mitted (as a modern poet might admit images) to perform their function of truly expressing his *état d'âme,* and hence organic to to his purpose. Just why then is Spenser's allusive description of Belphoebe, her forehead like a broad table, graven with Love's triumphs, her words like dropping honey, silver music, dressed so, and looking so, like Diana, like the Queen of the Amazons—including all its rich hidden associations, with Ariosto's Alcina, Tasso's Clarice, Virgil's Venus—why is this image on the other hand evidence of a theory of "decorative" poetic diction, unfunctional, lavishly ornate? Because one speaks of things we call pretty? I admit a difference in the two images. But surely no principle is more dangerous than to base our conception of a writer's poetics upon whether the items he mentions seem to us pleasing. Nor should we then in turn base our understanding of *why* that poet's images differ from another's upon the difference in poetic which we find in them.

Ultimately most of these confusions and uncertainties result from an insufficient understanding of the relation of the origin and function of images in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century practice to the poetic theory of their creators. Our omissions and evasions on this score are in part due to our unwillingness to accept the Renaissance poetic with its strong emphasis on "teaching," as valid even for that period. It is a commonplace that Renaissance theory was unbending in its recommendation of "utility" as an aim for poetry, "to teach and to delight." Similar and equally strong was the emphasis upon the rhetorical aim of persuading the reader—whether through argument or through some more seductive method of assailing the mind and compelling to assent. These didactic and rhetorical functions of poetry set the conditions for the use of images. This means nothing so simple as that all images invented in accord with such theory took the form of examples or analogies conducing to moral elevation. It meant rather a pronounced stress upon the logical usefulness of images (however subtly and delicately that might be conceived) for stating whatever truth was the author's concern (at however far a remove from the strictly "moral" were the provinces he must explore). In fact, this paper as it proceeds will suggest redefinitions of the didactic aim of poetry as it conditioned imagery, and a final section will draw together claims made about one particular function of

imagery by suggesting its relation to the chief aims of poetry as the Renaissance saw them.

The basic theses, over-simplified, are these. The character and method of an image are determined by its function, and its terms are thereby limited though not prescribed. Typical modern functions, such as accurate sensuous representation or connotative power, are in the period concerned subordinated to logical functions—not only analogy and example but many others: discrimination, perspicuity of statement, argument from cause, precise definition. There is at this time definite connection between logical training and the methods of forming and using images, with a considerable relationship between the Ramistic re-organization of logic and the lines of development taken by imagery in the first half of the seventeenth century. These last two theses hold with peculiar strength largely because of Renaissance conceptions of the "useful" as the final cause of poetry, and of the responsibility of poetry as an instrument of reason.

Since this essay is a rapid presentation of the main thesis of two middle chapters of a book, it cannot be a quite self-sufficient piece of work. It must for example be limited to only one of the several functions of imagery. It cannot adequately discuss the last point. It must take for granted a certain amount of knowledge. And it can illustrate but little of the only service a method of considering imagery can perform: through application of that method to actual images in their contexts, to lead to the better understanding and enjoyment of whole poems. I shall save time by taking all my examples from Renaissance poetry. It must be remembered, however, that several points may apply to images of any period.

II

Recent studies have made clear the extent to which the whole framework of thought in the period was dominated by logic.[2] It

[2] Any student of the period can support this immediately with his own knowledge; the quickest way for me to do so is to refer to such a gathering together of pertinent evidence (which will recall the work of Leach, Mullinger, Foster Watson *et al.* on curricula and textbooks) as that in Hardin Craig, *The Enchanted Glass* (N. Y., 1936), esp. chap. vi, with its notes and bibliography. Another useful book for quick review of various theorists (although I do not agree with the author's judgments in relating theory to practice) is William G. Crane's *Wit and Rhetoric during the Renaissance* (N. Y., 1937). Perry Miller, *The New England Mind* (N. Y., 1939), esp. chap. v, is also extremely valuable in indicating certain bases

seems not unreasonable to examine the poetic practice of the minds of the period in the light of the training those minds had been given —in that day a logical training, and a training so universal and pervasive that it is comparable to no modern way of directing the mind. Points at which habituation to such modes of thinking might influence imagery will be indicated as we proceed. Modern imagery is written under a poetic which exalts imaginative association, rather than the conscious logical control at which Renaissance poetic aimed. I believe that the poets in the whole period of which we are speaking consciously attempted to control their imaginings, certainly when setting them down, according to the laws of thinking which they were taught should govern composition; and I believe that those laws were the laws of logic. I do not mean that their imaginations worked by logic, any more than ours do. Differences between artist and logician were indeed recognized in theory and admired in practice. But of any conception that the two represented types of mind differing in their structure and in their processes of thinking or responding to others' thoughts, we find no trace. There was a place for the "imagination" in Renaissance psychology, but its function was conceived as an integral part of the mind's intellectual functions; and, so far as one can see, the practice of writers of the time (to say nothing of the theory) shows no notion of any opposition between "logical" and "imaginative" mind-activity that would disturb conceptions then current of how the mind was made, or of its relations to the rest of the total personality.

That logical method is a basis for imaginative composition is taken for granted in all theory of the period, whether in the critical works to be quoted later, or in the rhetoricians' insistence on clearness and plainness as fundamental for eloquence, and in their use of the regular divisions, terms and methods of logic. The accepted interdependence of the two disciplines is clear in book after book.[3] Some writers discuss the relation with logic, like Sherry and

for and important consequences of this generalization (although again I do not agree with certain judgments made in chapters treating stylistic matters).

[3] In, for example (to keep roughly to the period) Fabri, 1520, Cox, *ca.* 1530 (dependent on Melanchthon, 1521), both of Wilson's handbooks (1551, 1553), Rainolde, 1563, Fenner, 1584, Sherry's two manuals, 1550, 1555, Peacham, 1577, 1593. Again I must ask unconvinced readers to wait for more careful treatment of the relation of all these matters to rhetorical (and poetic) theory.

Peacham and Fraunce, and some do not; but the attitude throughout the period is consistently that to be quoted presently from Wilson. Mastery of the logician's tools is regarded as the necessary prerequisite to a successful accomplishment of the rhetorician's aim—the persuading of men. That both disciplines begin with training in *Inventio* and *Dispositio* is familiar; that the figures of rhetoric are consistently presented as helps toward the end which logic and rhetoric then held in common—persuasion—is less frequently realized by critics who comment upon "ornament" in poetry. The influence of medieval poetic and of Humanist ideas and education consolidated the fusion of the aims of poetry and of rhetoric; it is as an art of persuasion that poetry has special need of the methods of logic and the devices of rhetoric. Here one must insert a caveat that such statements will not seem to tell the truth about the actual literature of the period to a reader who shears down the significance of the terms I am using to the meanings they came to have in the nineteenth century. But with these terms carefully defined, this relating of the two disciplines on the basis of a common aim is illustrated by the literature. It is present in Italian and French poetic, both influential; it was particularly acceptable to the England not only of Ascham and Cheke but of the turn of the century. English poetic even of the later Renaissance exhibits this fusion of aims; and one treatise after another gives proof that it welcomed such a fusion not with rebellion but with enthusiasm, not as constricting the artist but as enhancing the dignity of poetry. Sidney was an influential example. Puttenham's defense of the Imagination clearly regards it as the faculty responsible for logic's first division, Invention; Daniel's insistence on "matter" as the first criterion of poetry refers to the same activity of the Imagination. Poets' praises of each other reveal the same conception of the relation of logic and imagination; Drayton on Spenser and Shakespeare, or Carew on Donne, are equally good as cases in point. The unification of the methods of all discourse and thinking is most clearly expressed in the Humanistic and rhetorical "logic" of Ramus. The significance of the greater stress on this inter-relationship in Ramistic logic is in part the subject of this paper; but Elizabethan theory and practice did not wait for Ramus to see and build upon the relation between the study of logic and the writing of poetry.

Primary in a study of the springs of imagery is the most well-worn part of any logic text, the *Topics* or "places" of Invention,[4] the points of departure used in finding the matter of one's argument. Consistent and long-continued training in composing by this method was given to every young Renaissance student, whatever orthodox logic he used, the Latin texts, or English versions such as Wilson, Blundevile, Evans, Lever. The influence of constant training would be chiefly toward inculcating the practice of stopping to think of a number of regular, specified ways in which the thought to be conveyed could be developed, and presently of using those ways habitually. The content or terms of images would not be thus determined, though the logical process would impose a certain delimitation. "Places" which naturally brought imagery into one's writings are those of *kind* or *species, property, difference* (the basis of Puttenham's "figure of difference"), *adjuncts. Adjuncts* was a fruitful place (often identical with that called *circumstances* in the rhetorics); to invent by thinking of the various adjuncts of something produces imagery. As Wilson remarks in his *Rule of Reason* (41 ff.), this and related places are much used in praises and dispraises (as in lyrics), and are of great help for amplifying matters (i.e., "making more impressive," not "dilating upon"). *Adjuncts* produces fairly simply imagery, frequently not metaphor but descriptive detail; Spenser uses it a great deal, but equally good examples can be found in Lord Herbert or Marvell. The imagery of the Belphoebe description partly quoted above is mostly found from the place *adjuncts;* so is the simple imagery in the first 8 lines of Donne's *Anagram* (Elegy II); Flavia seems painted with a different technique *not* because she is unpleasing, but because with line 10 Donne turns from this simpler place to a definition of essence or nature based on multiple places.

[4] I do not attempt to indicate passages nor to use direct quotations; the materials utilized are those in which orthodox logics agree. These versions named are: The rule/of Reason, conteinyng/ the Arte of / Logike . . . by Thomas/ Wilson . . . M. D. Lxiij./ . . . London; The Art of / Logike./ Plainely taught in the English tongue,/by M. *Blundeuile* . . ./London, 1599; [Lewis Evans, The Abridgement of Logique] (n. d., t. p. missing; BM copy); The Arte/of Reason, rightly/ termed, *Witcraft,* . . ./ Made by Raphe Leuer./ . . . London, . . . 1573. Of course many others, Latin and English, have been consulted. If the reader has none of the commonly used Peripatetic logics at hand, summaries and applications made in Craig, *op. cit.,* chap. vi., are useful.

But perhaps most important is the place *cause*. I shall elsewhere demonstrate how image after image seems to have resulted from the agility with which logic-trained minds perceived, in things otherwise dissimilar, a likeness in *cause:* especially in *final cause,* sometimes in *efficient cause,* more seldom in the more literal *formal* or *material cause.* Donne's famous compass image is based on *final, efficient,* and *formal cause,* and *from* this basis comes its force as support for a concept—which is its reason for being. Of the various types of *repugnances, contraries* is oftenest the basis from which an image has been seen, though Donne or Sidney will sometimes build a long image on the more tenuous place *privation;* and pursuits of *contradictories* are not at all confined to the familiar if-love-be-fire-how-can-it-then-be-ice.

At the risk of some overlapping of classifications (which indeed we may be sure also characterized the writers' remembrance of their logical training), it is proper that we should recognize the separate importance given in orthodox logics to *definition* and *division* as methods of procedure. Every student learned to define and divide; these are the portion a book like Cleland's *Institution of a/young noble man* (1607) recommends the victim to "learne al . . . by hart"; as popular technical catchwords for current techniques they would correspond today, say, to our "experimental method," "complex," "subconscious." *Definition,* explains Blundevile in Book II, treating Definition and Division, can be by name, by difference from other things, metaphorical by the use of a figure, by contrary, by circumlocution, by what the thing lacks, by example, by praise or dispraise, by similitude, by etymology. To define by these means is to produce imagery (and imagery with an expository function and character) as naturally as the attempt to paint an object produces an awareness of its sensuous qualities. If one will take "An Automobile" or "An American," or even an abstraction like "Fascism" or "Love," or anything else whose nature attracts, repels, or puzzles him, and think of it as Blundevile here tells him to, he will find that he has created ten images before he has paused half as many minutes. And, indeed, he will have gone through a process which, *so far as the images are concerned,* seems to have been the process which gave us one after another sonnet or lyric on Sleep, or on Death, or on a lady's power, or on a deceased friend's virtues. A very

great many lyrics of this period are just what the logical exercises set under this section were: a definition by praise or dispraise, a definition by similitudes, by contraries. Reflective poems generally go further, to a conclusion based upon the definition. But the *images* were begot by the intent to define. It is worth noticing that in types of literature with other aims (narrative, dramatic), the occurrence of a passage which tries to define will ordinarily result in the intrusion of images that are homely, radical, or wittily rounded with epigrammatic or paradoxical statement. (This could be illustrated time and again from Spenser.) That is to say: to the degree that intention shifts toward the stricter intentions of logic, method tends to shift, and with it (rather than with the factor of the personality who is writing) will shift the tone, terms, and character of the imagery. This is as true in 1580 as in 1615.

"Of Division" tells the student to divide the general into specials, the whole into its parts, the substance from its accidents. (Puttenham's *Distribution;* treated by the rhetorics under Amplification.) The simplest division is of the whole into its parts; it produces logically simple imagery (the reader may check on his own; let him reread the next letter he writes). We distinguish what is often practically an exercise in *division* in some of the uses of *icon* or *allegoria* or *exemplum,* figures to be found in all periods, but of which the Elizabethan was particularly fond. Not, I think, because he conceived of images as a form of gorgeous ornament to be put on, because he held the "externalized" theory of poetic diction and ornament of which he is so often accused. His predilections are to be related rather to the fact that poetry still, as in the Middle Ages, did much of the story-telling that was done; this type of *division* is indigenous to narrative. Many such elaborate but logically simple images have quite frankly the telling of a tiny fiction as their purpose; in lyrics (as in "Cupid and my Campaspe played") they are the poem's subject matter, not its decoration. A similar reason is the Elizabethan's habituation to the emblem, to story in picture, with didactic point. Many conceits found their ingenuities by the habitual division of whole into parts, like Sidney's "Queene Vertues Court, which some call *Stellas* face" (*A. and S.* 9), with its red porphire door with lock of pearl, *etc.* The type of image resulting from this simple logical base is peculiar to no period; Donne's *Elegy* VIII ("The Comparison"),

with its telling off of head, breast, arms, etc., is like a late medieval "catalogue" poem in reverse. *Division* can produce witty and compressed effects as well—a result more likely when the division is the more uncommon one of the general into its specials.

One other point regarding the relation between the processes of logic and the process by which images come to be, and come to be chosen, must be emphasized. This relation was peculiarly clear to a Renaissance writer who had been early habituated to search for similitudes consciously based on the different modes of similarity between things, by training from childhood in the application of the ten Aristotelian categories or predicaments—recommended by Wilson as "this store house [whence ye maie] take stuffe at will." Whereas the Elizabethans show consistent awareness of the relation of metaphor to logic, it is lost sight of in much modern discussion of imagery. Leaving to one side for the moment the looser use of the word to refer merely to descriptive detail, I would affirm that the distinguishing feature of an image, by reference to which it may be compared with others, and its origin conjectured, is the *logical basis* upon which the poet has perceived comparableness, not the subject-matter into which his comparison has drawn him. Modern criticism classifies and criticizes images by looking at the latter. Elizabethan criticism is indifferent to the latter, and extremely alert to the former. The Elizabethan writer, unlike the modern reader, was trained very early to habitual awareness of the logical bases of similitudes. It is clear that thinking from certain of the predicaments would result immediately in imagery—more especially from *quality, substance, manner of doing.*[5] Al-

[5] The first step in thinking, whatever orthodox logic the Renaissance student used, was to "name the very nature of thyngs" (Wilson, f. 8, 14) by reference to or application of the ten categories or predicaments: substance, quantity, quality, relation, manner of doing, manner of suffering, when, where, *situs*, and *habitus*. The fact that most images are seen upon examination to be "from" one or another (or a combination) of these predicaments, results from no peculiarity of Renaissance thinking. It is still true. We make images from them constantly; this is from an advertisement in yesterday's *New York Times:* "His is the man's point of view. He loathes the *battle-ship-grey* anonymity of just ordinarily nice clothes [comparison based on *quality*]. He considers a costume a failure if it doesn't cause the headwaiter to salaam *like a jackknife* [based on *manner of doing*]." An example of the difference between simple image and conceit, based on this method of analysis, may be clarifying. When the ugly fiend follows Guyon with monstrous stalk (*FQ* II, vii, 26) to have him as a prey 'if euer sleepe his eye-*strings* did *vntye*," the bases of

though the Renaissance writer had had a good deal more practice in observing the workings of this logical process, Renaissance images are of course not peculiar in being subsumable under the predicaments. In fact, an image can be defined, from the point of view of what happens (however unselfconsciously) in the process of its conception, as two things (not necessarily concrete) *seen to be in a parallel predicament.* The three predicaments above result in the simplest types of imagery; multiple parallels in predicament result in more and more complicated images; the conceit, whether Elizabethan or metaphysical, is sometimes based on one of the more tenuous logical links, but characteristically *is based on multiple parallels,* frequently in three or four predicaments simultaneously.

III

All the above points need exemplification and proof, which will be given in the more extended treatment; but it is at least clear that the Renaissance writer trained in these methods understood some-

likeness are *formal cause* and *manner of doing.* The image is simple. So is Donne's when he says in *The Extasie,* "Our eye-beames twisted, and did thred Our eyes, upon one double string." But nothing could be more falsifying than to classify these as "string" images, from "Domestic Life," and thereupon, for that similarity in area drawn upon, to relate them to that other image in *The Funerall,* when with a rapid pile-up of multiple predicaments and places Donne says: "For if the sinewie thread my braine lets fall [*quality, formal cause*]: Through every part, Can tye those parts [*manner of doing*], and make me one of all [*final cause*]; These haires which upward grew [similar *formal cause,* contrasted *manner of doing*], and strength and art Have from a better braine, Can better do it" [effect of different *qualities* from different *material cause,* upon *final cause*]. Rather than the irrelevant likeness fastened on when we attempt to classify images by such externals as the area whence their content is taken, surely what we should notice here is the difference which results when an image has been found through the poet's perception of comparableness simultaneously on the basis of many and different logical predicaments.

Even a conscious awareness of the logical base used would not determine the precise terms of an image, though the base would delimit choice somewhat, just as Donne, however imaginatively interested in the sea—as one critic proves him from his images—could not seize on it for his eyes-threaded-together image, though those eyes might have seemed to him blue as the sea. Properties are impertinent when he needs an image based on formal cause and manner of doing. This seems to me to throw grave doubts upon the validity of certain conclusions arrived at through study of the "characteristic" content of certain poets' images. The poet's interests are far from being the most important factor governing his choice.

thing very specific from the statement that "evry man should seek to have his logic perfit, before he look to profit in Rhetoric" (Wilson, *Arte of Rh.*, 113). I shall leave it at this and get on to a consideration of the possible impact upon imagery of the Ramist reorganization of logic; I shall use Sidney's imagery for the frame of reference (although I shall add an example from Donne). That will introduce the matter of strictly functional imagery in as unfriendly an atmosphere as possible. For perhaps Sidney's imagery has been called merely "decorative" more often than that of any other writer, even among the Elizabethans. He is credited with a use of imagery as ornament-which-one-could-"add"-to-the-thought-as-a-garment; the *Arcadia* is seen as the worst and grimmest example of this conception and its resultant "poetic diction." But the same conscious Art cannot be denied to his sonnets, and there has been a consistent gap between the attribution to their author of a theory which could produce only heavy over-decoration and the simultaneous recognition that actually their effect upon us is one of witty gaiety, real feeling bound and laced together with controlled and agile thinking. His imagery is a good complicated example of an emphasis which was to distinguish certain writers of the century following. Donne on the other hand has come to be extolled as a pioneer in the revolt against this "decorative" imagery. Yet I think it can be proved that when Donne and Sidney (or for that matter Donne and Daniel, or Donne and Spenser, though I shall not treat them here) had similar aims in any passage, as they frequently did, their imagery is likewise similar in method, in terms and in effect. I sometimes think that the chief difference is that Donne expresses attitudes in which we happen to be interested, that consequently we take time to read carefully what he says, and conclude that his *method* is "modern" because the typical Elizabethan's differing *content* is unfashionable. The dichotomy is of course both unconsciously made and unhappy.

I do not intend to claim that the Ramistic reorganization of logic changed imagery basically. I would sooner make the desperate claim that nothing ever has. It merely underlined a mode of thinking and an attitude toward poetry which has in no period of thought been absent. Both of the two poets used for illustration knew Ramist logic. I shall simply utilize approximately contemporary English texts of Ramus in an attempt to see how his under-

standing of the methods of thought and expression would affect writers' use of imagery; I keep constantly in mind, as a check and an indication of how contemporaries might relate the two disciplines of poetry and logic, the two books written by Sidney's friend and protégé Abraham Fraunce, in which Ramus's logic is related to current English poetry.[6]

It is scarcely necessary for me to give evidence for the currency and importance in England of Ramus's reorganization of what had been for centuries an educated man's chief tools of thought and expression.[7] The furor with which controversies raged over it from the time of its introduction in Cambridge in the 1570's is common knowledge; so also is the Protestant championship of "P. Ramus Martyr"; so also the ardent promulgation of Ramist thought by academic partisans such as Downame of Christ's or William Temple of King's, Sidney's secretary from 1585. That Donne knew Ramus was pointed out some time since. Everyone knows of Sidney's interest in the matter. Temple's dedication to him of his 1584 annotated edition of Ramus's *Dialectica* is as famous as the two books of Fraunce in 1588, using examples from Sidney and Spenser to expound the *Lawiers Logike* and the *Arcadian Rhetorike;* Temple's *Logicall Analysis of twentie select psalmes,* 1605, is less often referred to. The connections I have made and the process I shall follow through were indicated by the men who were friends and contemporaries of the poets whom we

[6] Abraham Fraunce, The Lawiers Lo/gike,/At London . . . 1588; The/Arcadian Rhetorike:/ . . . At London, . . . [1588]. English versions of Ramus, and Ramist logics in English, are: The Logike/of the moste/excellent philo-/sopher P. Ramus Martyr,/ . . . London . . ./Anno M. D. Lxxiiii.; The/Art of/Logick./ Gathered out of *Aristotle,*/and set in due forme . . ./by *Pe-/ter Ramus,* . . . With a short Exposition of the Prae-/cepts, . . . by Antony Wotton./London/ . . . 1626 (but see preface on his forty years' use of it); The/Logicians/School-Master:/ or,/A Comment upon/Ramus Logick./By Mr. *Alexander Richardson* . . . London:/ . . . 1657; (occasionally useful for its greater fullness of application); Syntagma/Logicum./or/The Diuine/ Logike./ . . . By Thomas Granger . . . /London, . . . 1620; The/Art of Logick,/ deliuered in/the precepts/ of *Aristotle*/ and *Ramus./* . . . *by* Tho: Spencer./London . . . 1628.

[7] Any reader who wishes will find evidence enough and to spare in Miller, *op. cit.,* esp. in the Appendix on "The Literature of Ramus' Logic in Europe," on the various controversies, the number of editions mounting to a hundred and more, the translations and utilizations in English from 1574 on; or see the books cited above in note 2, and their references. On Donne see Coffin, *John Donne and the New Philosophy* (N. Y., 1937), 36 and notes.

study; moderns have chosen to neglect such indications in favor of ways of looking at poetry that are the outcome of an aesthetic unthought of when those poets composed what we now praise or blame.

Ramus fathered no revolution in thought; he introduced a reorganization in method. But for a poet to accept that reorganization, or even to be influenced by it at second hand, was, I think, for that poet to write somewhat differently. Two differences between orthodox and Ramist logic are significant for my thesis. One notices two things when one picks up a Ramist logic and its attendant Ramist rhetoric by Talaeus: the first is that the list of predicaments is not there—instead the student starts straight off with a consideration of the places of Invention and their utilization in finding matter. The second unorthodoxy is that logic has engulfed the *Invention* and *Disposition* sections of Rhetoric. Thus all rhetoric has disappeared *as an art separate in itself* except the two last divisions of *elocutio* and *pronuntiatio;* these are all that Talaeus treats under Rhetoric. Invention and Disposition, for any type of discourse, are learned as a part of Dialectic. The rhetorical art of the persuasive expression of thought—a concern primarily with form—has largely *become one with* the logical art of the "invention" and disposition of thought—a concern primarily with content; finding *what* to say includes, overlaps, is the same as, finding *how* to say it. I take up first the unorthodoxy as regards the predicaments.

A student of Ramist logic was started out immediately with the places of Invention and their utilization for finding the matter of one's discourse.[8] Thus the student, using this textbook, has no separate preliminary training in recognizing or looking for the predicaments, in amplifying a matter by extended exercises examining, for example, something's or someone's *manner of doing,* or

[8] The easiest way to refresh one's memory of Ramus's logic is to turn to Milton's *A fuller institution of the Art of Logic, arranged after the method of Peter Ramus,* edited and translated by Allan H. Gilbert for the Columbia Milton (N. Y., 1935). Or a reader not currently concerned with these fairly inaccessible texts will find the exposition in Perry Miller's *New England Mind* (esp. ch. v) to fill a need felt for some years; it at last makes accessible by clear analysis the main structure of Ramus's thought. Especially helpful in the absence of opportunity to refer back to the texts themselves are such discussions as his clarification of Ramist terminology and of the import of certain controversial points.

habitus ("apparayling"); he has no chapter on each of the predicaments (as in Blundevile or Lever), with explanations, for example, of the various kinds of *qualities* one may pay attention to, or of whence they proceed. Not that the predicaments disappear. They are simply introduced when needed in the discussion of some place of Invention—as *substance* would necessarily be examined to make an argument from the place *material cause*, or as the predicament *relation* must be perceived to argue some point on the basis of the place *relatives*. Or as *manner of doing* enters when, from the place *privatives*, one uses the "depriving argument" that a thing cannot be both journeying and sitting still, say, or a person both blind and seeing. Or as the predicament *quality* must enter if one uses the *adversatives* good and evil, for example, in a "repugning" argument (if he can prove the one, the other is thereby repugned); or when one finds an argument from *opposites*, that a thing being black cannot be white. Ramus would have none of the traditional listing of terms divorced from use; by his method, exercises in applying the predicaments come in only as they are used in the invention of "arguments," which in dialectic consisted of concepts. The predicaments, which we have seen to be fruitful bases of imagery, are there, of course—but only insofar as they are thus part of the finding of concepts. For example, the predicaments *quantity* or *quality* (both never-ending fountains of imagery) appear in the chapter on "Equal arguments"; one illustration, e.g., comes from Davison's *Martial:* "Why doe your wife and you so ill agree," since you brawl as much as she scolds, since you are as brazen-faced as she is impudent—the images are just part of the finding of an argument of equality, on which is based an argument for a certain course of action (1626 version, 64–70). The list of places of invention is familiar enough, though differently ordered, and the predicaments occur and recur within them.

The other unorthodoxy is the teaching of Invention and Disposition only under Dialectic; the student learned all this old first part of rhetoric as he studied his logic text proper. For the "invention" of the matter of his discourse—of whatever kind—, and for its effective disposition, he got his training as he learned how to invent and dispose dialectically. Whatever the character of that discourse, the first step was the finding of reasonable and proper matter from the regular places of invention used in dia-

lectic—the examples by which those places are explained are taken not from some theological disputation but from Virgil, Cicero, Ovid, St. Matthew, Horace (examples for the first two places, 1574 version). The poets offered as good examples of properly constructed dialectic as the masters of any other type of discourse. One must continually remember that in Ramus's teaching "Invention" was handled once and for all as this first section of dialectic, the science of how to think; the old first division of rhetoric, *Inventio*, was considered to have been here sufficiently taught, and taught in its proper place. He who wished to think, write or speak had mastered the art of inventing his matter once he had learned to "find arguments" from the regular dialectical places. Poetry too is dialectic.

This second unorthodoxy in the Ramist reorganization made perhaps the greatest impact upon poetics. The shearing of Invention and Disposition from rhetoric, far from releasing the writer of a poetical discourse from serious attention to the art of finding his matter, meant rather that he found his helps for the learning of that art solely in the first section of Dialectic. I have said that I do not consider the importance of this change sensational, sudden, or obvious to those who were influenced by it. But the implications are various and subtle. If all the products of the thinking human mind take their origin in the same way, if all discourse is one, poetry is no longer even superficially thought of as separable from other disciplines so far as *method* of composition is concerned. The poet thinks as any man thinks; the discipline and control which he exercises are those of logic. This is the direct implication of the use of the works of great poets for the illustration of the logical places. That the word dialectic *covered* the poets' accomplishment the Ramist does not say and we need not believe. But the discipline of that method is not a partial one, useful in certain departments of man's thinking; it is the natural one, it does and should characterize all thinking. So the Ramist logics proclaimed,[9] and I think such training, and indeed the very existence of such attitudes, affected the practice of poetry.

The regular dialectical places in a Ramist logic are: cause (efficient, material, formal, final), effect, subjects, adjuncts, differing

[9] This could be documented at length from Fraunce or from Ramus himself and the various Ramist texts.

or "dissentany" arguments, "gaynesettes" or opposites, relatives, "repugning" and "denying" arguments, depriving arguments, equal arguments, of the more, of the less, the similitude and dissimilitude, conjugates and notation ("nominal" arguments from etymology, cognates), distribution, the perfect definition (by causes), the imperfect definition (by description), and the last "inartificial" arguments from testimony, divine and human. For place after place, the illustrations are frequently simply what we should call images, but displayed for their utility as "arguments"; Fraunce in his *Lawiers Logike* takes most of his from Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender* and Sidney. Now this in itself is not so important, surprising or new; one can find fish in any river if one uses it for fishing and not for swimming. But the conception of poetry and of imagery which it emphasizes is important. A poet who has even caught sight of the notion that images are "arguments" in the Ramist sense, will do two things: put new stress upon one among their several possible functions—their logical function; and tend to use from among the images which occur to him those with certain peculiar characteristics—those which accomplish this logical function well.

I must explain further Ramus's use of the word "argument," for I shall use it now only in his sense. In dialectic, each concept is an "argument," through which we reach to greater and greater concepts, also "arguments"; in turn, each concept is built up of lesser "arguments," down to the very words which compose it, in an unbroken *crescendo* and *decrescendo*. Every object in nature is (not only "is the basis for") an "argument," say of order, of God; the qualities of anything are the "arguments" of that subject. A single word may be an "argument," in that it "hath a fitnesse to argue something" (1626, p. 5). The argument is the relatableness of a word or a thing, its "reference" or "relation" (p. 6), by which it is ready to hook into other arguments, and by an infinite progression build up into the whole structure of truth. "Collour blacke" and "beames so bright" are arguments of Stella's lovely eyes, their "blacke" and "bright" seemingly repugning arguments but only seemingly so; those eyes again arguments of nature of whom they are the "chiefe worke." When in describing Zelmane's dumbfoundedness at Philoclea's beauty as she undresses to bathe Sidney says (*Arc.* II, xi, 217), "like a Dya-

mond taken from out the rocke, or rather like the Sun getting from under a cloud, and shewing his naked beames to the full vew," he takes two "arguments" from nature, which as he declares illustrate that "argument" of beauty in respect of which it is "too much for a patient sight, delight too strong for a stayed conceipt." One could go on with this forever, for it is clear that to a Ramist the world was full of arguments; the moment you utilize anything for its significance, it becomes one. Prof. Perry Miller's phrase for an "argument," "any counter employed in thinking," is just and useful. One seized on these relatable bits of truth as arguments, one juxtaposed them so that the hooked end caught on, one put them out in plain sight in an orderly disposition, that he who read might observe, and observing relate, and relating arrive at truth. Perception is not a process separable from judging, nor imaging separable from the relating of significances into concepts.

Consider what will happen if images are conceived of as "arguments," as the concrete evidences in which concepts reside. The first and simplest effect is upon their number. The more arguments, the better case. The next effect is more important: one can state a point *in* and *by* an image; images *are* the statement of a concept. It is not only as well said thus, but sometimes better, for thus is allowed the introduction of a second argument in addition to the one the writer is occupied in stating conceptually. If one can say a thing in terms of something else, it is all the more completely said. The influential later Ramist Richardson makes the implication overt, in commenting on Talaeus' rhetoric, saying that tropes are sweet not only because they "give a splendour, but besides that it *carries us to another Argument* from whence it was drawn" (*Log. Sch.*, 50). Images have a newly emphasized value, and writing in images a newly underlined justification.

Of course arguments from some of the places of invention beget images more readily than others. *Adjuncts* are "copious, and ordinary arguments"; Sidney throws them in with a single characterizing epithet, or in one of his frequent parentheses. Similarly we find strings of simple images from the place *effect;* especially in lyrics, "matter of praysing and dispraysing commonly is set from this place" (*Lawiers Logike*, 29). The importance of definition as a function often largely accomplished by imagery remained; "A perfect definition," says the Wotton translation of Ramus, "is

a generall marke, or badge of the *causes,* which make the essence, or the nature of a thing" (103–4). Sidney cannot resist apprehending and commenting upon the nature of things from their causes, even if only in passing or parenthetically. Man is a mind bound to self-destruction in a vessel of earth (material cause), a book where blots be rife (final cause), seeing his wretched state only through grief, even like a top which naught but whipping moves (efficient cause). Sidney can mention almost no object in nature, or action, without considering its nature from its causes; to some degree his well-known fondness for the pathetic fallacy springs from this habitual pursuit. Almost anything Sidney mentions he distills an "argument" from.

As to the Ramist the world is compounded of "reasons" or arguments, each with its "fitnesse to argue something," so a writer who wrote under that conception leaps from the back of one image to the back of the next, ordering that world by the logical disposition of those arguments. Yet, though florid, this is at the utmost remove from the "decorative" use of imagery; instead of the single analogy adduced by the traditional logician to aid in a deduction, to a Ramist each image is as functional as the last, each such argument an aid in the perception of the innumerable self-evident axiomatic concepts which it was the task of orderly thinking to lay out before a reader. From this in part results the extraordinary density of such a style. Not only are almost impossible demands made upon our perceptive powers, as the writer leads us from one perceived argument to another; but all are leaves, twigs, branches, limbs of some great complicated tree which is the concept being conveyed. To a Ramist, no image could be in any strict sense decorative; all "arguments" are by definition functional. But the complication that could result from seeing in almost *everything* a significance that could relate it to the matter in hand, is an awesome and fearful one. No doubt in a jungle everything is attached somewhere and nothing is painted on for the fun of the thing; the problem of organization may yet be terrific. In Donne, where we deal with smaller units and are exempt from the difficulty of having a narrative to pursue, the organization can be sterner and the function of each image as "argument" is more immediately perceptible. Yet in both, as a Ramist understood the arguments of logic, the structure is organic, its parts functional and its unity a logical unity.

IV

The physical difficulties of the proper logical analysis of a structure of which each image is a living part are obvious. I shall examine one. Here is Sidney's second sonnet to Stella:

> Not at first sight, nor with a dribbing shot,
> Love gave the wound, which while I breath will bleede:
> But knowne, worth did in tract of time proceede,
> Till by degrees it had full conquest got.
> I sawe and lik'd, I lik'd but loved not,
> I lov'd, but did not straight what love decreede:
> At length to Loves decrees, I first agreede.
> Yet with repining at so partiall lot.
> Now even *that foot-steppe of lost libertie*
> Is gone, and now *like slave borne Muscovite:*
> I call it praise to suffer tyrannie,
> And nowe imploy the remnant of my wit
> To make my selfe beleeve that all is well,
> While with a feling skill *I paint my hell.*

This is strictly organized from a single logical place, "differing" or "dissentany" arguments. The nature of the emotion is ascertained by perceiving how it dissents from some other known thing. Not wounded at first sight, but gradually through perception of worth, not loving but liking, not doing what Love decreed at once but only at length, not willingly but with repining, *but* now, most ungrudging of all grudgingly accomplished victories, the prisoner finds his liberty in painting the praises of his dungeon. The tag in the Wotton Ramus (48) or Fraunce (46) fits exactly: "These arguments are commonly knowne by these markes, *Not this, but that.* Although, yet." Among the former's examples is Spenser's Priamond, Diamond, Triamond description, built on a similar structure. It will be perceived that the images themselves *are stating* an argument by differences, building a concept which explains the exact state of Sidney's mind and thence praises his lady, the final cause of the whole sonnet.

The images in this sonnet surely did not come out of any new method or purpose discovered by Ramus—any more than its undenied use of a large number of the rhetorician's "figures of words" came from "Elizabethan" intent to decorate (most of them underline the logical antithesis). Indeed Puttenham's "orismus,

or the Definer of difference"[10] (frequently *definitio* in the rhetorics), is no new thing in poetry; Chaucer uses it constantly; so do modern poets. But what I am trying to point out is an increased awareness of logical structure in poetry, a sterner attention to the needs of the conceptual argument, and a firm use of imagery to help get it said—and with all this the emphases which were made current by the Ramist reorganization of logic may have had something to do. "Like slave borne Muscovite" is a fairly simple image logically. It was surely found through the logical process of thinking "who else suffered tyranny and liked it." Poets have other things to remember than imagery, and it is a painted "hell" partly because "all is *well*" may have got set down first—but even so this image is wittily acceptable because it is one more argument of the concept stated in "I call it praise to suffer tyrannie"; I paint my hell. The most striking and surprising image, "that foot-steppe of lost libertie," is strictly metaphysical. It is suggestive, embedded in the context, suddenly concrete when least expected, yet the comparison is to an abstraction with no possible sensuous resemblance (to "the quality of mind which makes one at least regret the loss of one's liberty"); it is used to clarify a notion, giving a quality of mental agility to our experience of the poem by the demands it makes on our ability quickly to relate dissimilars and pass on without losing a note; it is almost denuded of sensuous force and given a curious extenuated hair-thin quality by the compression of the metonymy (or metaphor with embedded metonymy[11])

[10] *The Arte of English Poesie,* 1589. Ed. Willcock and Walker (Cambridge, 1936), 231.

[11] A footstep is what is left when a person is gone; faint resentment, the last trace of his liberty, is departed, he is enslaved (parallel effect, manner of doing, property, perhaps cause). Some readers may experience the sensuous quality of this image as a visual image of the marks of footsteps—Man Friday; to others it may have a vague half-heard quality, as of the last steps of the free jailer who has imprisoned one. Professor Lovejoy suggests to me that Sidney is here simply Englishing *vestigium*—ingenious and very probable, especially if the image came to mind via *vestigy* (uselessly trisyllabic, but for which *NED* gives 16th century quotations; the first for *vestige* in this use is 1602). In this case the image was meant to have the visual shade of meaning (footstep for footprint was not uncommon); and the important figure is *translatio* (almost a *catechresis* because of the intangibility of the first term) rather than *metonimia.* The deliberate use of a word which in English carried a much stronger visual image than *token* or *remnant* would have (other synonyms for *vestigium, sign* or *trace,* are not dissyllables, and *symbol*

and by the fact that the parallel holds in at least three logical predicaments all of which are buried. All these are qualities of the metaphysical image so-called. It is certainly not a metaphysical image of genius; this is scarcely one of Sidney's best sonnets; but the method, characteristics, and effect, if we stop to read with the care we give Donne, are those we think of as characterizing the images of later poets. Nothing is more certain than that an interest in Ramist logic did *not* "cause" the metaphysical image. There are far too many of them, born to blush still untalked of, sprinkling the pages of those who wrote before he ever chose the thesis "whatever has been said by Aristotle is false." But conceptions of the functions and the methods of writing which his work re-emphasized may have had much to do with re-emphasis upon the type of imagery we call metaphysical.

It is still easier to demonstrate in Donne how the character of images is conditioned by their function, because he takes for granted, and applies in a much stricter fashion, this idea that poetic decorum sanctioned the use of poetry for the ends of dialectic. Let me stress again that this was not new; it was implicit in medieval poetic, overt in Renaissance didactic theory, strengthened by Ramistic inference and statement. To say this is not to deny for writer or reader an emotional experience in any given poem; the dichotomy between "thought" and "feeling" which has I think falsified our theories of earlier imagery is a modern one that troubled neither him nor his predecessors; a medieval rhetorician would have been far less surprised than is Mr. T. S. Eliot at the way Donne "feels" his "thoughts" in *A Valediction: of weeping:*[12]

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does not quite serve) was evidently intended to add to the subtler intellectual pleasure which the reader would get, plus perception of the two senses in another language as well (though this reader missed it).

[12] Which I choose because it is less obviously "logical" in pattern and effect, and has been much examined and praised as an example of Donne's impatient desire to convey the more "poetic" truth of individual experience as opposed to general or reflective statement of truth—resulting in ambiguity, indirection, as his feeling burst through the fetters of traditional form and reached that higher (more "modern" and "adult") plane of imaginative as versus logical truth. All Donne quotations are from Grierson's edition (London, 1912); those from Sidney, from *Complete Works,* ed. Feuillerat, (1912, 1922); the 1590 *Arcadia* was used.

Let me powre forth
My teares before thy face, whil'st I stay here,
For thy face coines them, and thy stampe they beare,
And by this Mintage they are something worth,
For thus they bee
Pregnant of thee;
Fruits of much griefe they are, emblemes of more,
When a teare falls, that thou falst which it bore,
So thou and I are nothing then, when on a divers shore.
On a round ball
A workeman that hath copies by, can lay
An Europe, Afrique, and an Asia,
And quickly make that, which was nothing, *All*,
So doth each teare,
Which thee doth weare,
A globe, yea world by that impression grow,
Till thy teares mixt with mine doe overflow
This world, by waters sent from thee, my heaven dissolved so.

O more then Moone,
Draw not up seas to drowne me in thy spheare,
Weepe me not dead, in thine armes, but forbeare
To teach the sea, what it may doe too soone;
Let not the winde
Example finde,
To doe me more harme, then it purposeth;
Since thou and I sigh one anothers breath,
Who e'r sighes most, is cruellest, and hasts the others death.

This is like the other *Valediction* poems and *Elegy* XII ("His parting") in that all of them consider some aspect of the general problem: the possibility of circumventing the destiny of in-fact-going by in-truth-remaining, permanence in seeming impermanence, the examination of the real (ideal) cause of the death of love, as over against this factitious one of physical separation. In varied ways they examine the notion that absence is a kind of death (clear for example in the *Valedictions* "Of My Name in the Window," and "Forbidding Mourning"), in varied ways they circle around the notion that only one within the unity can do it the treason of a disharmony which does destroy because it attacks essence not accident. The ideas are familiar in Donne's other poems, and the "Death, thou shalt die" defiance of his religious poems is no new spiritualism at odds with an earlier sensualism. Like "Of

the Booke," so "Of Weeping" considers but one aspect of the problem; the question of "How I shall stay, *though* she [Destiny] Esloygne me thus" includes both *whether I can* and *do not that which will destroy me.* There is no need to make a "baroque" schizophrenia or an ironic doublemindedness out of what is perfectly normal as process or aspect. The poet's logic, not merely his sensibility, gives each poem its unity. The thesis of "Of Weeping" is such an appeal—an appeal that she who can, destroy him not; and it is logically organized around three arguments by comparatives. "Let me weep but do not you"—and he supports it by three image-arguments which state why she should not. The conclusion, "let neither destroy other" is reached by the turn from dissentany to consentany arguments, a turn foreshadowed in the puzzling end of stanza 1.

The image of his tears receiving value from her stamp has nothing symbolic or obscure about it; he could have found no better logical parallel, wanting as he did something which has likeness in the predicaments of form, manner of doing and resultant effect. The connection between impression stamped and "pregnant of" is perfectly traditional. Confusing to a modern mind less accustomed to separating off logical comparableness, perhaps, is the way Donne gives this masculine side of reproducing oneself to the lady, calmly ignoring all associative or "situation-al" elements in the image in his intent on the logical connection which is here functional to his point. For both images have a logical function; they are there not out of interest in novelty, or in coinage, or in the demands of his sensibility, but to help him to round his first proposition: that though each of his tears here before her face is a recreation of her (hence valuable), yet separated and on a diverse shore she can in such reflections not come to being. So are these tears (in each of which that reflection of her which is in it falls, fruit of his grief) emblems of much more grief; separated she is no-thing in being uncreated, he no-thing in not reflecting her. There is nothing "occult" about the resemblances in the next image either; Dr. Johnson's logic rather than his imagination was at fault in that his attention to the content or the "recesses of learning" whence it came blinded him to its perfect decorum, logically. The globe before its continents were painted on it, "no-thing" in the same sense as in the stanza above (in lacking its significance), is like

each tear in multiple predicaments: form, manner of suffering, final cause. This image has the usual characteristics of images used to define. But again it is used to score a logical point; these little worlds are overflowed when she weeps, flooded when she his heaven dissolves. Now that we have seen clearly by a comparative the difference between his weeping with her and away from her, by another comparative the difference between his tears and hers (although characteristically that is not all that is accomplished by the two images), the logic of the peculiarly tender concluding stanza is persuasive with a great sweetness—*though* he weep, may she yet not do so. May she not weep him dead in her arms, as the dissolved heavens (more than moon but including its powers) once drowned the world in that other sad deluge. The last turn of this argument is a simpler image (analogy); let her not by her manner of doing give example to the sea and wind to do him harm. He is as susceptible of the last argument as she, and the comparative is consentany; let neither haste the other's death, for it is the nature of love that either can sigh away the other's breath. That the truth of the logic deepens the feeling goes without saying—or would have, for Donne. This is individual experience, to be sure; but surely no poet ever showed more interest in arriving at general truth by it. For a good Ramist, all experience is compound of arguments which are vehicles to that arrival. Donne may not have been one, but one could write a Ramist dialectic from his images.

V

It is clear that the Ramist's open extension of the methods of logic to poetry constitutes a pronouncement on the function of poetry. So far this paper has dealt with images from the angle of *method,* the processes by which they were begotten and controlled. These Ramistic emphases upon logical method played in with, bolstered up, underlined notions of the *final cause* of poetry already dominant in Renaissance theory. The Elizabethans put down perfectly clearly what they believed was the end and aim of poetry, but we have been loath to believe that artists we must respect could have held theories so at variance with our own. The amount and the compelling charm of their imagery have made one of the greatest talking-points in the argument that they did not in practice write toward those didactic ends to which the theory of

their time subscribed. It seems time for a wide-sweeping re-examination, *from the point of view of imagery,* of Renaissance discussions of poetry, to see if one may arrive at an understanding of the conception then held of the functions of images, their relation to "decoration," to "decorum," their part in "imitation"—in short, their place in the whole theory of poetry and its aims and methods—and then to apply that understanding to the practice of the period and see whether there is a real correlation or a gap. I can here only indicate the main matters I shall deal with in such an examination.

If one picks up a modern anthology, two functions account for a large proportion of the images found: the sensational function (accurate delineation of sensuous perceptions), and the connotative function (setting the emotional pitch). Perhaps among poets writing chiefly under the influence of Symbolist poetic the interest in complete expression of an *état d'âme,* without regard to the *logical* clarity of the poem, gives a third function to imagery. But when one has looked at these functions in the imagery of any given Renaissance poet, one has looked at a very small corner of the whole question of the uses to which he puts images. That small corner is about the size of the space given in Renaissance poetic to other than didactic final ends or aims for poetry. The period gave pretty short shrift to conceptions of poetry as painting, or poetry as music, or poetry as self-expression. The chief feature of Sidney's speaking-pictures is that they speak to a point. Of all the debated and debatable notions about poetry which flourished during the Renaissance, current ideas about the final cause, the end, of poetry had by far the most direct and powerful influence upon the character of imagery. And the impact, upon ordinary poetic practice, of the current "teach and delight" aims for poetry was, for imagery, the predominance of logical functions—functions not only of argumentation, but of clarification, exposition, discrimination. The presence of the usual intentions of logic in, for example, the reflective poem, the verse epistle, the lyric, had as its natural result the type of image we call metaphysical, even early in the period. There is an additional factor in the *genre* written in, so that certain exigencies of narrative or drama lessened the likelihood of images with primarily such logical functions. But the stress in theory of the period upon an aim which was particularly

that of logic—the inculcation of values through the appeal to right reason (*not* a purely "intellectual" process by Elizabethan psychology)—normally and necessarily resulted in a conception of imagery's functions as predominantly logical. Ramist teaching and methods played directly in with this conception, and the metaphysical image is in the direct line of development. It is not in rebellion against the didactic; it is part of it.

Imagery might even by Elizabethan theory be most didactic when it was most sensuous. The poet's "teaching" does not equate with "exhorting to moral elevation" in Elizabethan theory or Elizabethan practice—though either an Elizabethan or a Jacobean poet might accomplish such elevation and maintain his calm, his courage and his honour. Didactic imagery might quite well assist a poet to argue cogently against accepted moral attitudes. The stress on the didactic amounts to making it a desideratum that images be functional. The image it would exclude is not the one which exhibited no designs toward the moral elevation of the reader, but rather the one which was only in the poem because it happened to occur to the author. Art was not description. It made evaluations; it might enunciate values which other men saw as mistaken, or which seemed tiny in import, belonging to an area seemingly amoral; if often enunciated them by most circuitous methods. Poetry must speak to the mind. But of course that did not mean that it was to speak only to the intellect (quite probably an impossible notion to the Elizabethan). It might persuade by far more potent modes of operation (though it is difficult to find Elizabethan images where enjoyment is not enriched by a logical process in the reader: apprehension of their delicate relations to context). The images themselves might be quite in line with didactic theory and still not declare their functional character; they might simply help to state an intellectual position, or help to present a sensuous experience, with such clarity or such seductive force that a reader's judgment was swayed. But of this last responsibility they were not free. In other words, the use of images in the period demonstrates that partial fusion of the aims of logician, poet and rhetorician which emphasized in each discipline its character as an art of persuasion. A "didactic" poetry which made free use of the methods of the other two disciplines was thus implemented with especial power, without needing to lose any of

its own peculiar force. It is scarcely necessary to observe that a Sidney or a Donne did not identify poetry with the other disciplines.[13] But poetry was professed by men who had a very firm respect for man's conscious mind, and sooner or later its persuasions were meant to reach the judgment, its devices and images to mount up into a statement that spoke to man's reason. Moreover, no conception which a Sidney, a Donne, a Spenser, had of the mind's workings would lead them to suppose that any divorce from "imagination" need follow upon this most natural of all routings for poetry.

It must be understood that such a conception of imagery, as sharing in that aim of pursuing wisdom which poetry had in common with the other disciplines, did not decry its *power* to move the affections or its *capacity* to delight; both are praised, the last certainly required. Such a conception did, however, admit only of such imagery as was useful, ultimately, to the purposes of the judging mind. Renaissance theory is fully cognizant of the affection-moving power and the delight-giving capacity of imagery; but it did not admit these as ends, it rather conceived of them as means thus made most fortunately and extremely strong. When Daniel says of the Greeks and Latins that "We admire them not for their smooth-gliding words, nor their measures, but for their *inuentions*,"[14] he does not mean to deny the indispensability of these stylistic delights, but he does mean that they must help to convey something of which our reasoning minds can make use. We have looked above at just such functional imagery, part of Invention,

[13] Sidney makes the distinctions between them in paragraph after paragraph of his exposition of their common aims. Lodge notes the distinctions in the midst of berating Gosson for not perceiving this unification.

[14] *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. Gregory Smith, II, 364 (London, 1904). For the Italian critics used here, I have thought it simplest to quote in English, and to avoid the paraphernalia of footnotes by confining what could be a bulky piling up of documentation to citations from one accessible and scholarly volume, Allan H. Gilbert's *Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden*, refs. in text to pages (New York, 1940). Naturally, the few actual quotations I have room for are chosen because they are typical. Much care has been taken to see that they do not falsify the purport of an author's discussion as a whole, and that they do not disagree from but agree with other contemporary treatises. The modern quotation, based on I. A. Richards, comes from Cleanth Brooks, *Modern Poetry and the Tradition*, 48 (Chapel Hill, 1939); the prevalence of the point of view makes the singling out of single critics an inaccuracy.

the finding of matter. Daniel is not reducing poetry to prose formulae when he says that "it is *matter* that satisfies the iudiciall. . . ." Images were part of this matter, and intended such satisfaction.

This is at the farthest remove from much modern doctrine, with resulting differences in imagery. Just to clarify the difference, take the characteristic modern assertions that "it is never what a poem says that matters, but what it is"; "a poem is not a more or less true statement in metrical garb, but an organization of experience." Daniel is certainly saying flatly that truth of statement is exactly what does matter in a poem; that the organization of experience a poet brings to our attention is valuable as it makes him and us capable of more rather than less true judgments: "All their Poesie, all their Philosophie is nothing, vnlesse we bring the discerning light of conceipt with vs to apply it to vse" (367). I am not attempting here to praise or dispraise either theory, merely to distinguish between two concepts which have a profound effect upon imagery. Probably the chief response the most rebellious Elizabethan or Jacobean free-thinker, not understanding our poetic, would have to the images he met with in a collection of the best of modern poetry would be "and so what?" And similarly our conceptions of imagery's functions simply do not fit images chosen and constructed to help convey and clarify matter which satisfies the judgment, obedient first of all to the demands of the "light of conceipt."

If "the functions of the poet are that he should teach well, that he should delight, and that he should move," as Minturno says, his images will have the characteristics of the sentences Minturno is there discussing—they will teach by their acuteness, delight by their wit, move by their seriousness (297). Define "teach" and "move" as the Ramist defines it, and this is what Donne's images are designed to do. Or, just to get an example into play, and selecting an Elizabethan for his exuberance—when Marlowe is doing what he calls "using arguments," his Leander speaks to Hero in just such images:

> Base bullion for the stamp's sake we allow;
> Even so for men's impression do we you,
> By which alone, our reverend fathers say,
> Women receive perfection every way.
> (*Hero and Leander*, 265)

Concreteness is at a minimum; I doubt whether the reader knows if he envisaged a base or a silver coin; the faint visual stimulus is all but impertinent to the effect of the image. Leander's argument against virginity has a simple form of the wit we are accustomed to in later poets' sudden juxtapositions of unlike things with a single logical similarity; it ends in a "sentence"; its intent is neither sensuous nor dramatic; we are to be convinced, and smile as we are so. When images have the dialectical function of presenting to us the *reasonableness* of a position, they take on the usual characteristics of writing in that discipline. The gap between "reasonable" and "morally orthodox" is both intended to seem humorous and related to a central problem in Marlowe's thought.

The acceptance of poetry's responsibility for the stating of values, concepts, "arguments," had much to do with the character, the type and frequency of use, and the lines of development taken by Renaissance imagery. What was peculiarly affected was the *type of response expected from a reader.* The holding of what Mazzoni says after long discussion (372–86) is his "true opinion," that "perfect poetry concerns itself with delight for the sake of utility," did not necessarily limit poetry to the service of a certain group of ideas, but it did mean that other intentions of poetry (and of imagery) were relinquished or muted in favor of such intentions and methods as spoke foremost through the judging intelligence to the rest of the total personality.

I should perhaps not have said that other intentions were relinquished, for indeed they were all made contributory. As Mazzoni builds up his definition of the final cause of poetry, he sweeps into it all the aims for imagery which much modern poetry is content to consider as final. Considered in the first mode, poetry as an imitative art has as an end "the correctness of the image,"[15] its "exactness" (386, 378). Whether pursued by the Imagist, the slice-of-life school of realism, or the impressionist, this is recognizably a nineteenth- and twentieth-century poetic aim which conditioned types of imagery. But Mazzoni goes on to a second mode of consideration; as pastime or recreation poetry "was devised by the human intellect for the sake of delight" (384). In its recognition of "the delight that rises from *suitable* imitation," this aim

[15] Of course the word used here is not our word "image" nor "imagery."

covers those emphases upon craftsmanship, upon expression of and for itself, which is the *raison d'être* of much modern imagery. But Mazzoni goes on to a third mode of consideration, and "according to the rules of the third sort each good poet should compile his poems" (385–6); thus considered, poetry "should be directed to the useful," and is "classed under praiseworthy sophistic—that is, under the sophistic which arranges the appetite and subjects it to reason" (378). Although much of Mazzoni's discussion is set in the context of the utility of poetry to the state, both his examples and his own statements make clear that his conception of "the best poetry" is not of what we should call propaganda, but of a poetry which as Tasso says would "produce such a disposition in the soul," such "noble habits of the will" (485–6), as would strengthen the rule of reason in the conduct of human life, particularly in man's conduct as a social animal. Now an imagery with this final cause to assist must not only be highly purposeful and clearly intelligible; it will also inevitably be directed toward that part of the human personality or mind which judges of reasonableness or unreasonableness. Not only does seventeenth-century imagery share with Renaissance imagery that purposefulness and that logical intelligibility, but it is increasingly (possibly in part because of Ramistic emphasis on the logic of poetry) designed to speak primarily to the judging mind.

It is not accurate, however, to say loosely "hence much Elizabethan and most metaphysical imagery was intellectual." It was not, in our sense. Again, our divisions and our terminology do not make sense when applied to the writing of men who composed under the influence of a different understanding of the process by which the human mind could respond to what they were composing. Everyday Renaissance notions of this process did not make the sharp division which our everyday notions and our terms make between intellect and emotions, between thinking and feeling. Images could not speak to the intellect *or* the imagination *or* the emotions; they spoke in one single uninterrupted thought-act *through* the Imagination *to* the Understanding, thence *through* the Will *to* the Affections.[16] An image could not speak solely to any of these

[16] Again it is scarcely necessary in this simplified summary to give references to recent work on Elizabethan psychological theory; the reader can support from his own knowledge of Burton or Davies, or for quickness turn to Craig, *op. cit.*, chap. v, for references to contemporary treatises and the work of Bundy, Anderson, *et al.*

faculties. Marlowe's image of the bullion, found through Invention by the imagination, would be scrutinized by the understanding for the truth of its similitude and the reliability of its logical conclusion; then the *truth* "men may give women value by stamping them" relayed to the will would become the *value* "men should thus act," and the affections would impel one toward corresponding action. One couldn't think without feeling, couldn't understand without some motion, however slight, of the will transmitted to the affections, any more than one could think without having imagined. Nor did images "stimulate the imagination" and stop there; evaluation followed as the night the day. The conception of simply lodging images in a reader's mind and thinking of them as having no further history there would not fit the Elizabethan writer's notion of how the mind worked. The responding mechanism toward which images were directed had no receiving set which did not transmit what it received to the understanding which weighed truth, the will which (unless it were infected) embraced the true as good. In a sense, thus, the didactic theory of writing was inherent in current conceptions of the mind-process. Who wrote "taught," willy-nilly. But there were several points of control.

Now the structure and emphasis of an image is the measure of the poet's intention to affect with peculiar intensity one or another of the faculties. It must and will affect them all; the unity of the total response is indissoluble, and cannot be separated into the components (as we do) of intellectual and emotional. But the poet can control the sureness of his aim. Leander wishes to convince Hero (Marlowe to convince the reader)[17] of the reasonableness of a course of action; the more aid he can get from images which are peculiarly powerful to compel the Understanding to approval, the more immediate his success. And the grounds of such approval can only be the logical grounds of fitting analogies, accurate clarification of causes why and processes by which, exact analyses of quality, essence, nature of, subtle distinctions of difference, witty detection of the general through the special. This list

[17] Marlowe's analogy is not fitting, and that is part of the wit. But the author of *H. and L.* was not the advocate *for* chastity which a complete lack of seriousness throughout the argument would make him (if intended as clear). The dialectical use of imagery for didactic purposes and "teaching accepted morals" do not equate, either in Marlowe or other Elizabethans.

of functions accurately covers every image without exception in the Leander's-argument-to-Hero portions of Marlowe's poem; it describes just as accurately *most* of the images of Donne. These are the logical functions of imagery; they do not make the images "intellectual," but they may and usually do make them "metaphysical"; they appear *when they are needed* throughout the entire period and in any author, Spenser included; they are particularly numerous in the next century, in direct ratio to the number of poems whose aim demanded especially strong aid from images peculiarly powerful to compel the understanding to approval. But the task of images in establishing the rule of reason is not covered by these almost purely logical functions. The methods of judgment-suasion, especially as they were understood prior to Ramistic teaching, included an emphasis upon delight—not as an end in itself but as a means to efficacy in reaching the ends of the reason. In so far as images designed to delight, or images designed to move the affections, served clearly this rational final cause, they too showed by their character a recognition of this logical function of imagery. It is clear that Ramistic teaching would slight these secondary emphases, and would re-stress the dialectical appeal to the understanding through images whose logical function was primary and almost pure.

Much over-simplified, these are the functions of imagery as Renaissance poetic saw them, and I believe that practice conformed to these ideas until well after the end of the seventeenth century. Imagery in the service of the same final cause as dialectic, the distinguishing of the true and the recommending of the reasonable and hence the good, performed many functions strictly those of logic. Its relation here is to argument or exposition, but its didactic aim did not I think condemn it to an arid intellectualism. Imagery performed other functions less apparently logical, in its character as "delight"-ful instruction. Its relation here is to ornament, but its didactic or value-stating aim kept it from being mere "decoration." It performed other functions, logical only in cause, in its capacity of moving the will and affections; its relation here is to persuasion; a fundamentally didactic aim gave it its directive force. In each of the three categories, final cause and function exercised the strictest control over the methods and terms of each image. This is not because writers planned their images

according to the dictates of logic, for indeed the correlation must in most cases have been unselfconsciously arrived at, although after the penetration of Ramistic teachings there is an increasingly conscious and logically purposeful use of imagery. It is rather, however, because it lies in the nature of things that ends govern means, strictly and ineluctably. Unless the Elizabethan and seventeenth century image is looked at as a means and not an end, in poetry, it cannot be understood or appraised.

It may be enjoyed, if we wish, for effects its author did not intend it to have. This is justifiable enough, and it enters somewhat into the enjoyment of all poetry—by virtue of the nature of language, for one thing: words (and images) can mean to us only what our own mental lives have made them capable of meaning. But if we wish to avoid caprice and misunderstanding in that part of criticism which commends or condemns, we may not restrict any poet's mental life to ours, nor object to looking at what his may have been, nor cut down his measure to fit only the poetic aims given present prestige. Much of the last ten years' praise of the poets of the early seventeenth century does the first, and conversely the two latter may be helping us to the door of an era of obscurantist criticism of poets of the earlier Renaissance. These two groups of poets are far more like than different, in imagery as in poetics, and neither needs for its life the death of the other.

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CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF LITERARY AND PHILOLOGICAL RESEARCH[1]

By Tenney Frank

During recent years the methods and matter of literary and philological researches in our own university and elsewhere have undergone some changes and extensions; and the new tendencies have met with criticism, as such tendencies usually do. Our great predecessors here had to face animadversions in their day too, but that tumult has died. We have discovered that most of their work was sound and that it needs little revising. If some of us are turning toward other problems, it is not because we lack respect for their accomplishments; it is rather that we appreciate the thoroughness of their work. Finding many of the fundamental grammatical, linguistic and textual problems solved in our own fields, we naturally proceed toward the interpretation of literature in the light of far-sought influences, in connection with social cross-currents and with prevailing aesthetic and philosophical conceptions. We are entering fields where definitions are not so sure and the premises not always established.

Some of the rebukes that we have endured are misplaced. We are not in our graduate work attempting to make poets and novelists any more than astronomers are trying to teach students how to make new planets or chemists how to create new elements. We are trying to compose a reasonably accurate account of three thousand years of human self-expression. Nor is the criticism pertinent that we do not always keep a useful purpose in mind. The

[1] This paper, written by the late Professor Tenney Frank in 1936, was left unpublished and unrevised at his death. His executor has therefore been somewhat hesitant about authorizing its publication, but has deferred to the judgment of several scholars who have urged that it be printed. Originally delivered as a presidential address before the Johns Hopkins Philological Association, it took its illustrations for obvious reasons largely from the work of the author's colleagues in that university. A few allusions of purely temporary or local interest have been omitted; for a passage connecting biological and literary researches, a similar passage, more adequately developed in one of the author's lectures delivered at Oxford, has been substituted; but except for these and one or two other minor changes, the paper is published as it was written. Such emendations as it has received are due to the kindness of Professor Arthur O. Lovejoy, to whom I would express my deep sense of gratitude. (Grace Frank.)

alchemist who always worked to produce gold was certain of his purpose, but was not for that reason a better scientist than the chemist of today who is willing to follow the atom wherever it may lead with not one single thought of what useful end he may serve but that of knowledge.

Nor do we care for the criticism that insists that our methods should be uniform and directed to similar ends; for the subjects of our study are the expressions of countless human beings, no two of whom were alike in capacity or spirit. We must use every possible approach to plot our history. A recent discussion of the Imperial cult in the days of Augustus has illumined for the first time some passages of Horace and Vergil; the discovery of the great vowel shift in English revealed unknown aesthetic values in Chaucer. Dante was to some extent a closed book until medieval astrology, theology, and even the old bestiaries became known. There is no single method of approach. The critic may say all day long that such facts are irrelevant for aesthetic appreciation, but we know now that you and I are not aggregates of severed capacities. No work of art has only an aesthetic approach. Such criticism is based on a vanished compartmental psychology. Sound criticism of our work must proceed from the assumption that writers and readers are very complex human beings in whom there is an infinitely intricate interplay of sentience and perception, of memory and intelligence; and just criticism will not accept the formulae of any one theorist. We have been and will continue to be employing diverse methods suited to the diverse problems in hand and to our own diverse interests and capacities.

Perhaps the severest criticism has been directed against unintelligent source-hunting. But most of us have long since recognized the fact, I think, that scholars, who are by profession bookish delvers, are too prone to attribute bookishness to the authors studied in our courses; we have rightly been interested in the vitality of ideas and have cared little for mere records of *Belesenheit,* and we are too good-natured to care seriously for literary criminology.

The guilt of imposing the source-hunt on scholarship must, I fear, lie on the shoulders of the classicists. Not to mention the ancient *detractores* of Vergil and Horace and some conceited sleuths of the Renaissance, the chase began in good earnest on the Continent about a hundred and fifty years ago. Wilamowitz once

called attention to the fact that, while the Latin authors were at that time being read with sympathy in Holland, England and France, Germany was lagging behind in scholarship because of economic and political distress. When presently the Germans had more leisure for such reading, so-called "scientific methods" were coming into fashion and a new interest in Greek authors, imported from England and Holland, relegated Latin literature temporarily to source-hunters. Science was already getting precise results. Facts that could be stated quantitatively were at a premium. Syntactical statistics, *Realien,* and the collection of recognizable imitations came into vogue. This seemed to be scientific; and since the Latin poets had found much of their inspiration in their Greek predecessors, Latin studies now ran pell-mell into this chase. In Latin studies from Heyne (1800) to Forbiger (1870) Vergil was the favorite field of the delver. By that time the fashion had passed on to modern studies. We now have sagging shelves on the sources of Chaucer, Shakespeare—and all down to Gertrude Stein. T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound at times do their own annotating—to save themselves, one suspects, from the intervention of the doctorands.

I do not mean to say that this has been useless: the work had to be done for the sake of a precise story. Unfortunately, however, it deceived some young students into over-valuing petty facts in literary history because those facts seemed precise and tangible, into a failure to comprehend the significance of a line of poetry in case the imitator used his source with new connotations, into a bookish presupposition that life and experience frequently counted for less in poetry than some one's written word, into discounting genuine creative originality hidden modestly between quotation marks, and into misreading the setting and purpose of a work of art that dared repeat some bygone phrase or theme.

But of course we must know the nature of genuine sources. In the reading of Vergil, for instance, an intimate knowledge of the *Odyssey* is essential, if only because Vergil himself assumes at times that he is composing a kind of *obbligato* upon the melody of the *Odyssey.* In the *Aeneid* he often gives a passing reference to places and incidents mentioned by Homer, intentionally enriching his work with overtones of reminiscences—where he means that the music unheard shall be the richer. Most of our best English poets did the same—until the craze for a scientific habit mistaught us to

believe that thin originality was worth more in art than adequate interpretation and full communication.

There have been very lively debates among our educational and literary critics about all this. Some argue that the human spirit is changeless, that the best literature is not a "transcript of life" but an efflorescence, as it were, of something called inspiration. Others, who are themselves responsive to experiences in social contacts, give environment a larger rôle in artistic production, and hence, in studying literature, find the need to refer to biography and history. Fifty years ago most of us read Buckle and Taine. Our belief in environmental determinism was enforced by the implications we read into our theories of evolution, for we were prone then to believe that acquired characteristics merged into our mental inheritance. There followed a long series of books on "Life and Letters," and whether or no their authors too jauntily took for granted a causal connection between experience and inspiration, these works proved to be very popular, if only because they satisfied our curiosity in two diverse lines of interest. To be sure, many of such books revealed a sad lack of adequacy either in their understanding of historical facts or in their powers of aesthetic appreciation; they too often forced the fallacious argument *post hoc ergo;* but they did frequently illumine connections of importance that had been neglected.

The waning of our faith in this kind of criticism came, I believe, from a new turn in biology. I shall never forget the impression made upon a group of us who had been studying classics with more or less diligence when a professor first reported to us the theory of Weismann holding that acquired characteristics were not heritable, and then described the Mendelian law. Young people can believe in so-called scientific laws with destructive determination. We were quite ready for a while to abandon all study of historical background; we thought that Taine had misled us; that ameliorative legislation, missionary zeal, the direction of human efforts to improve circumstance were a waste of effort; that, in fact, genetics alone would cure the human race and disclose the way toward peopling the world with poets and saints.

What happened next in biology? It doesn't matter much; for we grew up, and learned in time that neither discoverable heredity nor comprehensible environment can completely explain any man. I suppose that most of us are now repeating Horace's famous

dichotomy of "nature" and "nurture": *indoles* and *doctrina*. Perhaps it is something to admit that we do not know what creates a poet, that, though source-hunting and the historical and environmental approaches are interesting pursuits and useful as branches of humanistic study, they never reveal the ultimate secret and probably contribute little toward creative art.

Of one important type of falconry practised by Bloomfield (of penultimate omniscience) we now hear little. In his early years he was inclined to accept Benfey's theory that India was the ultimate reservoir of folk tales; and to the last he hoped to produce an encyclopaedia of tales, aggregating them about East Indian lore. In recounting the scores of versions of the Joseph and Potiphar story, including very many Hindu forms, Egyptian, Persian, Arabic, and no less the Hippolytus and Phaedra drama, he claimed a connection, though he did not attempt to trace the links. Perhaps that cautious hesitation was due to a partial deference to the school of Sir James Frazer, which liked to attribute similarities in folk-tales to similarities in human experience in various parts of the world under given stages of culture, rather than to diffusions from one center. This latter school, working with anthropological tools rather than with those of philology, influenced also by our new consciousness of the immense age of the human race, has well-nigh succeeded in dampening our ardor for source-hunting in folk-lore on a large scale. "Origin" is now a less popular word in this field than it once was. We may perhaps without blasphemy express a doubt whether it would be profitable to carry the projected encyclopaedia to completion on the original scale.

For one thing the scholar is too prone to worship the written word that is available and too ignorant of the hidden ways of men to do such work safely. We may perhaps illustrate this by reference to Spargo's industrious book on *Virgil the Necromancer*. Some time, during the Middle Ages, tales of magic polarized about the name of Vergil, as jokes aggregated about Abe Lincoln's name sixty years ago. The process had started within a century after Vergil's death, as we learn from Suetonius, and continued before the dark ages, as we see in the reports of Donatus and Constantine. To what extent it continued between 500 and 1200 A.D. we do not know. In the twelfth century John of Salisbury left the first record of Vergil's "making a magic fly." Neckham a few years later told of his having a garden walled securely with air, also of

his use of a flying bridge; Conrad of Querfurt says that Vergil built Naples by magic, made a palladium, etc.; and so the volume of legend increased. Spargo has performed a very useful task not only in tracing the stories to the first known source but also in pointing out parallels for almost every item of such magic in tales not told of Vergil. He is also wisely diligent in criticizing Comparetti's hasty conclusion that the stories had grown up at Naples and spread over Europe by word of travellers. But when he in turn infers, with considerable insistence, that we have in the written words of John of Salisbury, Neckham, Conrad and the rest the true sources of the stories, I think we must conclude that he is a typical scholar worshipping the "idol of the scriptorium." Is it not a suspicious fact that by Suetonius' time a magic poplar had sprung to full size in one day at the place where Vergil was born, and that by Constantine's time Vergil had become the prophet of Christ and, soon after, a recipient of dedicated altars? Spargo's insistence that, if Vergil's name had been collecting the stardust of magic tales through several centuries, we should have some reference to it, is rather unconvincing; for the medieval writers before John of Salisbury, if they commented on Vergil, were very apt to air their bookish knowledge of Servius and the written texts. The liberty of mixing oral legends with manuscript learning is unusual in connection with classical passages in the Middle Ages.

I do not intend to set up a rival theory to that of Spargo, but I do think we must not forget the magic flies and horses, the magic carpets and walls, of older folk-stories, all the way from ancient India and Egypt to the Near East (the old, old seed-ground of story-telling). Many such tales came westward, and here too the delver is confused by the loss of continuous records. He is too apt to rely on Moors and Crusaders, who seem to so many of our medievalists to be the great story peddlers. I shall not even insist that scores of writers of Latin and Greek now lost to us retold tales of the kind that Petronius liked to sprinkle in the table talk of his Syrian immigrants at Rome. We need only remember that in the early Byzantine period the great traders of the Mediterranean who penetrated Gaul, Germany, and Spain were Syrians; that in the first three centuries of our era hundreds of thousands of slaves from the East lived in Italy, Spain, and Gaul; that during the same period all the legions along the Rhine, in Spain, and in Britain had numerous auxiliary cohorts recruited in Cappadocia, Armenia,

Syria, and even Parthia—stationed usually for terms of twenty years and often to the end of life. It is dangerous to assume that any story of interest circulating in the East did not become a part of the European oral stock-in-trade between the second and the sixth centuries, to emerge into written form much later, when writers learned to consider folk tales worthy of literary form.

This is not proof. But I hold that the tracker of tales should know enough social history to see that he may be wholly incorrect when he insists that the first occurrence in written form is necessarily an important source. Spargo's book is good in what it performs, but its implications may be wholly incorrect. How many writers of dissertations have yielded so far to the pseudo-scientific demand for precise facts amenable to quantitative statement that they have completely missed the value of the possible and probable that make up most of what has been worth while in the human story!

In the older works of the source-hunters the childish, undiscriminating heaping of insignificant parallels illustrated little but a ludicrous exhibitionism. Of that we need not speak. It was a more serious failing when learned scholars collected the parallels of opinions and ideas that were in fact not derivative but rather new natural outgrowths of similar experience. Given the human being, metaphysical idealism will appear above the surface, whether or not Plato is read; and naïve adolescents will continue to discover anew and by themselves much of the sentiment of the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*. By reading Plato the young man may telescope years of experience, but Plato is after all not the source of human nature. Very often when Plato was actually referred to a century ago, the reference was only a prop of authority for a statement that would not carry weight without the prop. The thinking of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries was more original than one would infer from the abundant citation of authorities. In other words, the literary historian who confines himself to written sources and references has told a very small part of the actual story.

The source-hunter has also been too frequently guilty of projecting the connotations of an old phrase into a modern turn of similar appearance. There are but few polymaths like Bloomfield and Gildersleeve left in the world, and the classicist who undertakes to give a wide range of modern parallels usually misses

the meaning in the new setting. Even Professor Paul Shorey, a man of amazing memory, who constantly illustrated his lectures on Plato, Aeschylus and Pindar with modern echoes, was often guilty of misapplication and of reading the ancient connotation into the modern phrase, when it was not there in precisely the same tone. In all such work our modern writers deserve first to be treated as independent thinkers, in so far as they are such, and their borrowed suggestions should be set in proper perspective among the ideas that come from many sources. The source-hunting should be done from the point of view of the final product, from the modern, not the ancient end.

The danger of the long-range method might be illustrated by W. J. Courthope's *History of English Poetry,* much used in my youth. Here the author lacked a thorough comprehension of the English authors and often gave undue emphasis to the classical sources. The task was too large for one man to compass and the emphasis was unjust. However, if ancient influences are to be brought to bear on modern problems, the modern specialist ought to do the work, for he can estimate the value of that influence as one of the many to be reckoned with.

There is a *History of French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century*[2] that will illustrate the method which seems practicable. I shall not embarrass myself by discussing the illustration at length. Suffice it to say that here a specialist on a modern subject fits into his story the vital traditions of the past as well as the environmental influences so far as they can be discovered. Is not that the direction which source-work should take to be fruitful? I shall venture to point to one more illustration of a valid method by referring to a well-known volume on *The Influence of Milton on English Poetry.*[3] The scope of the work is perilously extensive, but many important facts can be found only by this method. The work not only guages Milton's continuing vitality, traces the vicissitudes of his ideas, his verse forms, his diction, his music, but it seems to give actual proof that contact with poetry like that of Milton may elicit the fruits of genius in poets who, like Wordsworth and Keats, were willing to come under its influence, comprehend its qualities, and permit those qualities to stimulate and inspire. That seems to me a valuable and comforting result.

[2] By Henry Carrington Lancaster. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1929—.

[3] By Raymond Dexter Havens. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1922.

Perhaps the greatest interest at present is in the history of ideas. Nearly forty years ago Bloomfield called his brief book on Cerberus "the history of an idea." Kirby Flower Smith dealt largely with the descent or ascent of ideas, notions, superstitions, *e.g.*, the old concept of the "ages of man." Professor Chinard has been most successful in tracing the interchange of ideas across national boundaries. He has called his task a part of Comparative Literature, an expression at times too narrow, at times too broad to define his work. In his case it came to a very fertile study of political and social cross-currents, of more value perhaps in political history than in literature. The methods of Comparative Literature can be used with real profit, and must be employed, in dealing with the artistic literary forms and in penetrating the influences at work in periods of cosmopolitan culture. We shall need more of them as time goes on.

The most imposing attempt in the field of ideological history—destined doubtless to exert a very extensive influence on historical research—is another product of Johns Hopkins: *A Documentary History of Primitivism and Related Ideas.*[4] Unfortunately, the completion of such a work is probably beyond the capacity of any one man and will therefore reveal uneven spots and lack unity. The title of the first volume (*Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity*) might seem to emphasize the notion that it is devoted to the survival of primitive concepts. In part it does reveal the naïve, imitative traditionalism of dull minds, but the title understates the scope of the inquiry. The work will also set forth with adequate fullness the emergence of the idea of progress; it will reveal to the intelligent reader the fact that many poets have chosen the traditional texts depicting a primitive, simple life, not as a historical fact, but because it gave them a chance to idealize nature and human nature, and dwell upon their aesthetic side, or to preach a sermon against the misuse of the fruits of civilization, or to express, in well-understood and conventional phrases, man's longing to get back to the free and open out-of-doors where our racial instincts grew up in the millennia of a long past. The wary reader need not be misled. Vergil did not "sing the songs of Ascra through the towns of Rome" just because Hesiod had sung such songs. Hesiod originally wrote as he did in order to induce his greedy brother to

[4] General editors, Arthur O. Lovejoy, Gilbert Chinard, George Boas, Ronald S. Crane. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1935–.

give him back a part of a stolen farm. Vergil, a country lad, was indulging in memories of childhood, and perhaps in part painting an idealistic picture for the hordes of new colonists sent forth by Augustus. The name of Hesiod is used to give authority to his work at a time when such authority did much to advance the success of a book. Only a careless reader of the volume on *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* will take it as a collection of tralatitious stuff without vital meaning.

The book is of course not concerned with poetry as such, though very many of the passages cited as documents came into existence under aesthetic impulses. To Vergil and Tibullus the "Golden Age" was not an idea that mattered as idea—it was a figure of speech, an image that was capable of poetic treatment. For the logic of it they concerned themselves but little, and I am not sure how far such poetry ought to be included in a History of Ideas. Poets like Vergil and Lucretius, who are not afraid of packing into a passage suggestions found in many years of reading and thinking, provided they can convey images of beauty and emotional values as well as facts and fancies, must not have their passages classified too rigidly in logical schemes devised by scholars hunting for ideas; but we may let that pass.

Perhaps the chief peril in such a work lies in the cramming of such heterogeneous materials into a vast "history of an idea" which cannot take cognizance of all nuances that enter into each particular passage. Let me take as an illustration Vergil's famous fourth Eclogue, which pictures the "golden age" as destined to return with the reign of Augustus. To set this poem in a tradition of old ideas does some injustice to the historical facts. The important item is the fact that Horace, a young unknown rebel, had recently written his sixteenth Epode calling upon the Romans, who were weary of civil wars, to abandon Rome and sail westward to a new and peaceful region. He had pictured the blessings of the new life in the symbolic language of Golden Age imagery, and Vergil's answer naturally, since it is an answer, uses the same symbolism by suggesting that those very blessings will soon come to Rome under the new régime. That some of Vergil's imagery reflects an Oriental cast of the savior-literature of Syria is apparently due to the fact that some of his table-companions in Siro's circle, where Vergil lived, were Syrian teachers of philosophy who knew very well the prevailing prophecies of a coming savior all

through the East. In other words, the form of Horace's appeal determined the form of Vergil's response, and some of the imagery is colored by the idea of a savior, an idea of which Vergil had heard much in daily conversation. My very obvious point is that source-hunting is in danger of neglecting the individual contribution of each successive user. But, for all that, we are of course very grateful for the significant attempt made by this volume to trace evidences of the transmission of a tradition, where these exist, and to illustrate the wide prevalence of a certain idea, or group of ideas, and the diversity of its manifestations.

A few years ago we thought that Professor Lowes's *Road to Xanadu* might lead to a more fruitful method, as well as to a more tolerant attitude toward the search for sources. His was brilliant detective work, as fascinating as any that I have known, and seemed at times to penetrate into the very secrets of the creative process. But after all, is the book more than an illustration of our poet's breadth of reading and his rather whimsical mental processes? Are we any nearer the mystery of aesthetic laws or poetic creations after reading it? If you have to delve into old lore to find that the river "Alph" is a fusion of Arethusa, an ungeographical Nile, and a mythical Alpheus, does that explain the transmuting process that could beget the lines:

> Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
> Through caverns measureless to man
> Down to a sunless sea?

Professor Lowes's book is entertaining and instructive, but before you reach the end, are you not afraid that the author himself has fallen into an over-estimate of his discoveries, as though a mass of not very significant items lay very close to the heart of the matter? We need not criticize an exceedingly successful hunt, and yet we may admit that the conditions of the search are in this case too peculiar to afford us a new method applicable elsewhere, and that the real secrets of genius here, too, escape our powers of analysis.

I have spoken somewhat of the trends of literary studies, especially as exemplified in the work of men of our own university. It has on the whole been of a pioneering type, purposeful, intelligent, and thorough. Its partial failures are generally due to the intractable materials rather than to any mistakes in methods, for we

know now that minute research in human expression, patiently and honestly carried on, will in time win new facts for a large pattern. We have been unfairly accused of neglecting aesthetic values; but if students actually can be taught appreciation of poetry or of any other type of art, the college classes have that province, and the student who has an eye and ear for beauty will, thank Heaven, find it. The graduate study of literature is, as Greenlaw used to say, primarily a "learning"—one of the *scientiae*—, not "exact," but a *scientia* for all that, the learning that deals with the brief final product of a billion years (perhaps) of biological evolution: the clearest self-expression of the human being in these last three thousand years — about one per cent of human history. As a "learning," however, this study needs, perhaps, more than in the past, to find its importance in taking the lead in a history of culture and civilization. There is a tendency in America to require freshmen and sophomores to look for a survey of human history in courses that deal primarily with the political story. But is not man's most intimate self-expression (in literature) the proper material for such a survey? And should not most of our human surveys center about the literary product? Should not the literary historian fit the rest of human history into *his* scheme? Let me illustrate. In classics we have been passing through a rather bewildering experience. Fifty years ago most of our humanists, historians, philosophers and economists had read Greek and Latin in college. They could interpret their proper share of Livy, Plato, Cicero. To our dismay we have now found that specialization has proceeded to the point where the modern scholars in these fields have felt that they had to abandon the classics. As a result, we who teach Greek and Latin are compelled to spread over the abandoned field. We still teach our authors first of all, but in addition we spend much spare time in the cognate work of interpreting political history, Greek philosophy, Greek and Roman economics, and all the rest. I don't mean that we all try to cover the whole field. Fortunately for us, some tasks like text-constitution and grammar have been fairly well completed and now require less attention. But what has been added is immensely more. We are ready to admit that it has been good for us. The recent volumes on Greece and Rome in the *Cambridge Ancient History* were written largely by professors of Greek and Latin literature. For breadth and depth and clarity of comprehension they generally surpass all

previous ancient histories of the same scope. For instance, to comprehend Vergil we find not only grammar but a comprehension of Livy, Homer, Lucretius, the story of Roman imperialism, of the Augustan monarchy, and much else, absolutely essential. The student of Plato and Aristotle must know not only the Pre-Socratics, but Greek drama, Thucydides, much social and political history, and what not? Our historians of the Roman republic used to be satisfied with the historians: Polybius, Livy, and Plutarch. Now they read also what remains of literature: Ennius, Plautus, Lucilius, Cicero, Catullus, etc. Is it not true that the most important source of history is the contemporary non-historical literature?

In the classics we have been forced, to our great advantage, to cross departmental lines. You may say that the danger of "knowing more and more about less and less" may thus give way to "knowing less and less about more and more"; but that is not really the alternative. The time has come when we may at many points build on the vast amount of good work done by our diligent predecessors. We can, if we will, make use of such work and know more fields than they, and still be specialists in some tracts. We can begin to coordinate more results and make our own work the richer by a wider cooperation. In our chosen fields we shall understand our authors better if we read what they read, see what they saw, believe for the moment what they believed, enjoy the art and music of their day, enter into their enthusiasms and hatreds, fight their battles with them, hobnob with their fellows, in a word, be their most intimate associates in all respects. Perhaps this will not disclose the secrets of their inspiration or explain the springs of genius. Who has found the formula for that? But we are speaking here of an intellectual pursuit, the study of the knowable part of cultural history. Mankind is still the most fascinating subject of study, and the most important approach to it is man's most well considered self-expression, his literature. It is by failing to read the actual literature of each period—the deliberate expression of the contemporaries—that historians have so often failed to catch the spirit of the times they deal with. A good illustration from my field may be found in the Continental discussions of the Scipionic policies that brought Rome into Greece. Mommsen, who knew the Roman dramatists of the time thoroughly, learned from them what an amazing force philhellenism was, and

he gave that sentiment proper consideration in discussing the political problem. But his successors in Germany and France—men specializing in political history, brought up on "*Realpolitik*," and lacking the patience to read the literature of the time—would listen to nothing but economic and imperialistic explanations. Now a newer generation saturated in the "literature" acknowledges the correctness of Mommsen's analysis. One might illustrate similar tendencies in our own histories written by specialists in externals. Without reading the contemporaneous authors they followed Charles Beard in his projection into our past of a new-found economic interpretation of our Revolution, of the Constitution, of the Civil War, of our participation in the World War, disregarding the intense fire of emotion and ideas that we know of, and seeing little but a tangle of purse-strings throughout the whole story.

The change that I suggest would give us history that would be more consonant with the facts, richer in content, juster in values, and worth more as an educational force, even if it should have to find niches nearer the street level for abnormalities like Caesar and Napoleon. I actually believe that before long the students of literature are going to write our histories. Of course we are not going to emulate the omnivorous H. G. Wells, but within reasonable epochs we can take a broader view of cultural history than we have. I venture to think that the trend of our studies during the next generation will be toward coordinating under our literary departments the many, varied interests in the literary, cultural, and social fields. Perhaps we dare hope that the students who come to us then may be men and women of deep and wide cultural interests, who will be able to carry on this program more competently than we have.

GEORG BRANDES
1842–1927

By Oskar Seidlin

The intellectual climate of Denmark in the sixties of the last century was close and oppressive. The small insular kingdom had retreated into a sulking-corner since, abandoned by its Western European friends and trustees, it had been pushed aside by the Prussian and Austrian swords. In philosophy, the dominant trend was Hegelianism, which by its bold speculation diverted minds from the narrow realities of the day and surrounded even a reduced existence with the halo of reason; in religion, it was orthodoxy, lacking however Kierkegaard's vehement absoluteness and his passionate feeling of sinfulness; in literature, a tame romanticism, which since the days of Oehlenschläger had lost its inner genuineness while gaining, with the Heibergs and Goldschmidts, informal elegance and subtlety; in politics, a rigid narrow-mindedness, which in euphemistic naïveté called itself "conservatism," though looked at closely it betrayed itself as reaction. Ought one to embrace the ideas of foreigners, of those foreigners who had proved to be either enemies or traitors, who, having destroyed the political foundations of European stability, were now also trying by means of a Mephistophelian philosophy to shake the moral foundations of Europe: religion, the family, and the state? Though mutilated as a nation, the people were determined not to sacrifice their inner salvation; for they were, in spite of or rather because of their humiliation, "the people of God's heart," as Bishop Grundtvig had so beautifully expressed it.[1] So one locked oneself up in one's four walls and puttied one's windows that no draft from outside might enter. At that moment, a man appeared who could not breathe this stifling air, who flung the windows wide open, and forced Denmark back into the stream of the intellectual life of Europe. This man was Georg Brandes.

An intellectual revolution took place in Scandinavia. The barren soil sucked in the waters of the newly dug sources, and proved itself miraculously fertile. Scandinavian letters experienced a flowering which only a decade before no one would have

[1] *Levned* (D), III, 354. As far as possible, I have used the English translations of Brandes' works. In cases where no such translation exists, I have had recourse to and quoted from the Danish or the German edition. In these instances, the source is indicated by the symbols (D) and (G), following the note.

dared to dream of. One man had pierced the wall, had brought the main currents of Europe to Scandinavia. A man had appeared who was to carry in turn the spirit of the new and old Scandinavia to Europe, who was to make the Continent aware of Oehlenschläger and Kierkegaard, Bjoernson and Ibsen, Drachman and Bang, Strindberg and Jacobsen. This man was Georg Brandes.

Scandinavia was redeemed from her insular existence. But was this enough? Did not the great countries of Europe live side by side without knowing each other? Were not even the major thinkers amazingly unaware of what had happened and what was going on beyond their borders? What was a young Danish critic to think when a man like John Stuart Mill confessed frankly that he had never read a line of Hegel?[2] Europe needed help to understand herself; was it not obvious "that one could do much good by simply studying, confronting and understanding these great minds that fail to understand one another"?[3] Such a mediator was Georg Brandes.

I

"My life, my books may be insignificant in themselves, but if taken symbolically, they are of interest as microcosms."[4] Whatever the immense bulk of Brandes' literary activity may mean to us today, as an illustration of the intellectual movements in the last decades of the nineteenth century it is invaluable. In his writings the revival of empiricism, the sweep of positivism celebrate their triumphs; and even the counter-currents rather supplement than distort the picture of the nineteenth century.

His earliest ideas point in the direction of his future development. To be sure, they spring from very different sources. Kierkegaard and Hegel are his first teachers; but the young student is fascinated rather by their "poetic" qualities than by the real substance of their thought.[5] Although in his early publications Brandes still follows the speculative method of his great masters, he was mentally prepared for the new tendencies embodied in the works of David Friedrich Strauss and Feuerbach, Comte and Taine, Renan and Stuart Mill. He went over to the camp of the positivists; and his personal friendship with Renan,

[2] *Reminiscences of My Childhood and Youth* (*Levned*, I, 284).

[3] "John Stuart Mill," in Brandes, *Creative Spirits*, 200.

[4] *Levned* (D), III, 1.

[5] "I was being initiated into an attempt (Hegel's) to comprehend the universe which was half wisdom, half poetry" (*Reminiscences*, 99); and with reference to Kierkegaard, "his grace and charm, the perfect control of the language" (*Ibid.*, 61).

Taine and Mill, formed during his first visits to Paris, only precipitated a result which was inevitable.

Liberation from metaphysics, from speculation, was the new slogan, which Brandes now echoed. It was in the world of the exact sciences that the great revolutions of the human spirit took place; here were hidden the sources which nourished all the other forms of human expression.

> Ideas are not begotten by poets. They emerge from the labors of thinkers and inquirers . . . they develop and take form amid scientific investigations.[6]

Whatever cannot hold its own before the tribunal of science is legend and superstition, which arouse our interest solely because from them all the misery of humanity takes its origin.

How, then, was it possible for a modern to profess himself anything but a free-thinker? What, after all, were the scriptures of traditional religion but a collection of fairy-tales, whose supernatural elements stood in flagrant contrast to all scientific truth? With the weapons of modern psychological analysis, all of the evil spirit could be driven out. Feuerbach had become one of the great liberators of mankind[7] because, in Brandes' opinion, he had proved God to be a product of the human soul, had turned theology into anthropology, the theological into a physiological problem—and had solved it "in all essentials for all time."[8] It was the spirit of Feuerbach which prompted Brandes, at the beginning of his literary career, to put down in his diary the aphorism:

> When did God become Man? When Nature reached the point in its development at which the first man made his appearance. When Nature became man, then God did.[9]

It goes without saying that because of this attitude Brandes could not possibly understand a religious genius like Kierkegaard, in spite of the fact that he admired him profoundly. If such a religious obsession, such a contempt for science, for history and psychology, could be excused at all, it was, Brandes believed, only by assuming that his was a mental case, that here was a man who through a deplorable education had been forced on the wrong track.[10] Throughout his book on Kierkegaard there is a constant struggle going on between the biographer and his hero, except towards the end, when in the passionate fight of Kierkegaard

[6] "Ibsen," in Brandes, *Creative Spirits*, 376.
[7] *Main Currents of 19the Century Literature*, VI, 353.
[8] *Ibid*, 356.
[9] *Reminiscences*, 205.
[10] *Kierkegaard*, 24.

against the representatives of the Protestant church the two seem to have found a common platform; but Brandes overlooks the fact that the crusades of the free-thinker and the intense believer have nothing in common but the outer appearance.

In the light of scientific investigation, the positive religions could not maintain their position. What must take their place was a religion of humanity, a rationalistic moral philosophy, generally binding because freed from all relation to a vague and unexplainable notion of God.[11] He reiterates the argument that Kierkegaard never considered the possibility of a moral philosophy separated from religion.

> He never thought of morality as separate from Christianity, always sought support on some authority. . . . Kierkegaard is influenced so little by the progress of modern European science, that morality appears to him as morality only when it is supported by a positive religion.[12]

Provided humanity was in need of salvation—and he himself did not feel this need[13]—it was to be found only within the realm of science, in the study of nature. Just as earlier in the period of the Renaissance and in the days of Newton, an enthusiastic pantheism turned man's mind toward the science of nature, so Brandes' positivistic attitude originates in an almost religious veneration of nature and her immanent forces. Her imperturbability and her balance, her goodness and her cruelty, her self-sufficiency, which recognizes no law except her own, her incorruptibility, equally great in granting and refusing—these are again and again the occasion of his fervent admiration.[14] It is only consistent that, when but a young man, he was deeply impressed by Spinoza,[15] that his inmost self was stirred by Goethe's half poetical, half philosophical hymn *To Nature*.[16] It is true, Spinoza's conception was not entirely his own.

> Naturally Spinoza did not have the conception of life that he would have had, had he known modern chemistry and psychology. For him the universe was only a matter of extension and thought; he never rose to the living and fruitful infinite which history and natural science show us ruling in boundless space. Conceptions such as evolution and progress were foreign to him.[17]

[11] *Reminiscences,* 205.
[12] *Kierkegaard* (G), 153.
[13] *Reminiscences,* 108.
[14] *Ibid.,* 235.
[15] *Ibid.,* 101.
[16] Brandes, *Goethe,* I, 422.
[17] *Ibid.,* 435.

Spinoza had to be supplemented by another who, by means of the concepts of evolution and progress, transformed the dead into a living universe: Darwin.

Darwin's theory of evolution was in the eyes of Brandes the corner stone upon which the intellectual edifice of the nineteenth century rested.[18] So axiomatic had this become to him that, in his *Goethe,* he follows up all the connections which lead from the poet to Darwin. It is not surprising that he emphasized in his discussion of the *Metamorphose der Pflanzen* and of Goethe's osteological studies the parallel between Goethe and Darwin, without recognizing how little Goethe's *"inneres Gesetz"* has in common with Darwin's "survival of the fittest." And again, it is the natural law of evolution which provides the basis for his monumental work *Main Currents of Nineteenth-Century Literature,* the book which made him famous all through Europe, which was hailed by his friends as a revelation,[19] abused by his enemies as heresy. The human mind, constituting a unity, in all people and countries essentially the same, must necessarily everywhere obey the same laws of development, must traverse the same stages and find forms of expression whose parallelisms can be demonstrated without great difficulty.[20] What he sets out to present are the "six acts of a great play,"[21] a drama the hero of which is the psychology of Europe; he has no doubt that the development as reflected in the literatures of France, Germany, and England must necessarily be a "progressive" one. Thus the division of the acts offers itself automatically. First act: the beginning of reaction in the French emigrant literature; second act: beginning and victory of reaction in German Romanticism; third act: the stabilization of reaction in France; fourth act: the rebirth of freedom in English Naturalism; fifth act: the liberal tendencies in French Romanticism; sixth act: the victory of liberal thought in "Young Germany." At that point, the development has come to its close, the "fittest have survived" and a "new species" can originate.

He is permeated with the spirit of the new sciences, and wherever he discovers its essence in poetry, his enthusiasm is awakened. Being modern is Ibsen's foremost title to fame,[22] and the scientifically cool attitude in which Flaubert approaches the phe-

[18] *Ibid.,* 421.
[19] *Letters of Henrik Ibsen,* 233 and 266.
[20] *Reminiscences,* 258.
[21] *Main Currents,* I, ix.
[22] "Ibsen," in *Creative Spirits,* 392.

nomena of the outer world and the soul impresses him particularly.[23] Even in Goethe's *Iphigenie* he suspects traces of the doctrine of heredity, and he honestly wonders how it is possible that the model of pure humanity descends from a family of murderers and criminals.[24]

Just as Goethe's characters and problems are confronted by Brandes with the scientific doctrine of heredity, so Taine's theory of environment at times creeps into the discussion of Shakespeare. Richard III, the titan of wickedness, is judged by Taine's categories; and in Brandes' eyes Shakespeare's indifference towards the trinity of heredity, environment and education calls for an excuse.[25]

Whenever Brandes makes any direct statements concerning philosophical and psychological problems, he shows himself a typical empiricist. Kant's doctrine that the categories are the basis of our apperceptions is interpreted in a strictly physiological sense: "that is to say he who has green spectacles sees things green, and he who has red ones sees them red."[26] He follows the same trend of thought in denying, in accordance with the atomistic-empirical psychology, the constitutional unity of the Ego, and in trying to dissolve it into particles of association. Here we find prepared what a few years later was raised into a system by the Empirio-Criticists,—strangely enough as a part of the discussion of Romantic psychology, which would have been not a little at odds with such a conception of the Ego and the soul.

> The Ego is an artificial production, the result of associations of ideas. . . . Since the Ego is thus not an innate but an acquired conception, founded upon an association of ideas which has to maintain itself against the constant attacks of sleep, dreams, imaginations, hallucinations and mental derangements, it is by its nature exposed to manifold dangers. . . . It is of this correct psychological theory, originally propounded by Hume that the Romanticists, though they do not define it scientifically, nevertheless had a presentiment.[27]

The spirit of the scientific nineteenth century is a spirit of pragmatism and utilitarianism. It is not by chance that Brandes translated John Stuart Mill's *Utilitarianism* into Danish, nor that he greeted with naïve enthusiasm the technical application of scientific discoveries. The aristocratic purposelessness in which the Romanticists saw the highest goal of life and art aroused only his

[23] "Flaubert," *ibid.*, 236.
[24] *Goethe*, I, 384.
[25] *Shakespeare*, I, 133.
[26] *Main Currents*, II, 260.
[27] *Ibid.*, 172.

anger and protest. At great length he argues against Friedrich Schlegel, the prophet of holy indolence. In the midst of the discussion of Schlegel's *Lucinde,* he is overcome by indignation, and against Schlegel's assertion "industry and utility are the angels of death with the flaming swords who stand in the way of man's return to Paradise," he pits his emphatic verdict:

> Yes, that is exactly what they are. Industry and utility bar the way back to all Paradises which lie behind us. Therefore we hold them sacred! Utility is one of the main forms of good; and what is industry but the renunciation of distracting pleasures, the enthusiasm, the power whereby this good is attained?[28]

Since utility is one of the main forms of good, Brandes approves of placing poetry, the highest form of human expression, in the service of a definite cause. It is true, as we have seen, that he objects to having poetry utilized for religious ends. Even Ibsen must be blamed for having in *Brand* abused poetry as a vehicle of religious problems.[29] This however does not imply that Brandes tries to emancipate poetry from all practical tasks. For instance, the greatness of a poet is partly determined by the cause he fights for; and Brandes does not need elaborate arguments to convince himself that Shelley was a far greater poet than the German Romanticist Novalis. For Shelley fought for liberty, Novalis, however, for what Brandes calls reaction.[30]

Utility and industry: it would be hard to find two words which epitomize so briefly and adequately the credo of the nineteenth century. And it would be equally difficult to find a better illustration of this ethos of industry than the life and work of Georg Brandes. It seems prodigious what wealth of knowledge this single mind was capable of absorbing, how easily and prolifically he utilized and conveyed his abundant learning. What intensity of industry there must have been in a man who, in his eightieth year, could proudly announce to a friend that in the last seven years he had sent seventeen volumes to the printer's.[31] Activity was for

[28] *Main Currents,* II, 73.

[29] "It is the misfortune of contemporary literature that it fights in the service of a one-sided conception of religion, and frequently so inconsiderately and exclusively that it solemnly opposes all play of fancy as it is mirrored in poetry." (*Das Ibsenbuch* (G), 39.) See Ibsen's protest against this interpretation of *Brand* (*Letters of H. Ibsen,* 173).

[30] *Main Currents,* II, 206.

[31] "In these seven years I had written the four large works: *Goethe, Voltaire, Caesar, Michelangelo,* as well as the collection *Napoleon and Garibaldi* and the two

Brandes an article of faith, an end in itself; and it is amusing to notice his disgust when describing the idlers in Rome who concentrate their attention on the creases of their trousers or waste their time in front of the General Delivery boxes waiting for a letter from their mistresses.[32] In his literary criticism also his almost religious reverence for activity and his negation of all those powers which might frustrate the activity of man are manifest. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* presents him with a difficult problem; and he does not rest content until he has succeeded in clearing Shakespeare's play of the "reproach" that it depicts the tragedy of inactivity. What he sees in Hamlet is not a tragedy of inactivity, but of disgust with the world, and Hamlet's hesitation is explained as a technical device to fill the five acts of the drama.[33] Yes, Brandes, whom one cannot accuse of yielding to compromises, who had chosen as his watchword: "As flexible as possible when it is a question of understanding, as inflexible as possible if it is a question of speaking,"[34] raises his objections against Ibsen's rigorism, the passionate absoluteness of a Brand, because the rigid All or Nothing bars the way to action and the gradual realization of the ideal.[35]

Here we have arrived at the crossroad where Brandes takes leave of scientific positivism. This passionate urge for action could be erected only upon the basis of a philosophy of will, of an idealism of freedom. We shall see later the central function assigned to this idealism of freedom in Brandes' *Weltanschauung*. In this connection it may suffice to point out that in spite of being sincerely devoted to the spirit of the natural sciences, he was a fervent opponent of determinism, its legitimate child. So it was but natural that at times the attitude of the ideal scientist, his indifferent objectivity, his dispassionate observing and cool recording of facts, struck him as questionable and dangerous. And when he found in his dearly beloved Renan the following definition of the ideal scholar:

The savant is a spectator of the universe. He knows the world belongs to

volumes on the World War, and in addition to these eleven volumes published three volumes of *Collected Works* and a fourth volume of *Speeches*. The proof-reading alone of seventeen thick volumes is a task, not to mention the labor of writing them." (Letter to Henri Nathansen.) *Cf.* Henri Nathansen, *Jude oder Europäer Georg Brandes* (Frankfurt a.M., 1931), 218.

[32] *Levned*, II, 240.

[33] *Shakespeare*, II, 35.

[34] *Reminiscences*, 271.

[35] "Ibsen," *Creative Spirits*, 375.

him only as an object for study, and even if he could reform it, he would perhaps find it so curious an object that he would lose all desire to do so,

he had but this brief and superior retort: "It is scarcely likely that Renan was altogether in earnest when he uttered these audacious and aristocratic words."[36]

II

Brandes' belief in the sciences is harmoniously and indissolubly tied up with his belief in reason. Though we shall try later to do justice to the complex and contradictory elements in his attitude, we cannot overlook the rationalistic traits in his nature. He felt himself a servant of the word, the word which tries to lift the elusive and intangible into the realm of the clear, articulate, and ascertainable. We may be justified in taking in a symbolic sense his confession: "My fatherland is the Danish language." He did not feel himself bound by magic, irrational forces. The only bond he knew was the one to the *logos* which manifests itself in the word.

He was, up to a point, a disciple of the Enlightenment; and his admiration for Voltaire, the apostle of this movement, has something touching in it. He treats hardly any other subject with the same degree of critical benevolence, with the same idolizing fondness which tries to excuse or whitewash every dark spot in the character of his hero. He is intoxicated by the clarity of this mind, the conciseness of his analyses, the poignancy of his expressions. And he seems to be blind to the generalizing superficiality of his thoughts, and the questionable traits of character of this "champion of freedom." How sure he is of his victory when confronting Voltaire with Pascal, with what ease does he decide to which of the two the palm belongs:

Wherever Voltaire opposes his own clear and sane judgment to the paradoxes born of Pascal's dogma-ridden, tortured mind, Voltaire is right. Though theologians may find depth in Pascal's contemplations, a thinker will find them merely moving.[37]

No doubt he lacked the understanding of the "paradoxical"; and even more emphatically than against Pascal he protests against Kierkegaard, who saw in paradox the only road to knowledge, the only attempt at a solution of the problem of human existence.[38] It is in Brandes' view a symptom of Kierkegaard's disease that he so passionately clings to the paradoxical; lyricism and enthusiasm

[36] Renan, *ibid.*, 220.

[37] *Voltaire*, I, 204.

have afflicted his mind and sadly deranged the thought, which has to remain "cool" in order to be "healthy."

He demands clarity and precision in poetry just as in the process of thinking. He was repelled by Hegel's philosophy, which devaluated and dissolved the logical opposites of thesis and antithesis by the superimposition of the synthesis. Like philosophy, poetry also is expected to furnish us with clearcut answers, not to be satisfied with just demonstrating the problems but to work out a satisfactory and convincing solution.[39] If his attitude towards Ibsen vacillates at times, it is because he realizes only too well that the playwright raised questions without intending to offer clear and distinct answers. Planning and organizing reason, which has a firm grip on the various parts and weaves them into a closely-knit whole, has a large share in conceiving and executing a work of art. And in connection with Shakespeare, who was the highest idol of all the Romanticists just because of his lack of a distinct plan, of his willful arbitrariness, Brandes asserts:

> The art of dramatic writing consists almost entirely in preparing what is to come.[40]

At times the rationalistic attitude results in a shallow prosaicness to which the vital and emotional contents of poetry are a closed world. The revolutionary antirationalism of the German Storm and Stress seems ridiculous to him, Maximilian Klinger is "no artist, he lacks that sanity and balance indispensable to the creation of a character that does not act contrary to all principles of reason";[41] and his play, which gave the whole movement its name, is summed up as "world-famous nonsense." But this ersion is not restricted to minor writers; ultimately Brandes is at a loss what to do with Goethe's *Werther*. He fails to grasp the central problem of the novel, the ruin of an individual caused by the superabundance of his emotions, and finds nothing but the story of an unhappy love whose high tension strikes the sober critic as exaggerated and unintelligible.[42]

All poetic symbolism which escapes a healthy verification and analysis has a difficult time against such a prosaic mind. With some slight regret he watches Ibsen's turn towards symbolism;[43] and the way in which he dissects the symbolic elements in Ibsen's work often verges on the grotesque. Even his admission that he

[38] *Kierkegaard*, 103.
[39] *Ibsenbuch*, 38.
[40] *Shakespeare*, I, 157.
[41] *Goethe*, I, 189.
[42] *Ibid.*, 193.
[43] *Ibsenbuch* (G), 151.

is a "prosaic soul" fails to reconcile us to his lack of understanding for the poetic revelation which a symbol is able to achieve. Why did Brand's little son have to die? he asks in all earnestness; the calamity could have been avoided, had he only been sent to a milder climate.[44] What a disheartening philistinism is disclosed in his attempt to blur the moving symbolical meaning of Solness' ascent of the tower by a petty prosaic calculation:

> Let it once be remarked, that it is by no means a criterion of the artistic greatness of a master-mind whether or not he is seized by vertigo as he climbs to the top of a church steeple, and as a result, the entire mood of the play, its symbolism is lost.[45]

It is but natural that such a "prosaic soul" should have no spontaneous access to the deep enchantment of lyric poetry. It is true, he has tried again and again to capture the spirit of lyrics; and if we may believe the reports of his friends,[46] he was even capable of losing himself in the music and magic of a poem with a fervor verging on a trance. But basically he is unmusical, and one will find in his works hardly any reference to music. Where he has to draw the musical element into his discussion, as in the instance of Kierkegaard's audacious Don-Juan-analysis, one senses the helplessness of the critic who labels Mozart with the attributes "carefree and sparkling."[47] Notwithstanding Brandes' ability to experience poetry intensely, the analyses he puts in writing sound astonishingly flat and uninspired. In so far as he ventures beyond the purely *Weltanschauliche* of a poem, he contents himself with noncommittal remarks on the beauty of the language, the audacity and accuracy of the metaphors, the richness of the rhyme. And his extensive quotations from the poems under discussion, particularly conspicuous in the case of Heine,[48] seem to be an indication of his inability and an attempt to unload the task of interpretation on the shoulders of the reader. However, one must not jump to the conclusion that Brandes lacked an organ very sensitive to the shades and potentialities of a language. On the contrary, it is admirable how he, the foreigner, succeeded in feeling his way into the subtleties of German, French, and English styles. Nevertheless his works hardly contain a profound and creative analysis of lyrical poetry.

His basically rationalistic attitude shows up most conspicuously

[44] *Ibid.*, 45.
[45] *Ibid.*, 167.
[46] Edmund Gosse, *Two Visits to Denmark*, 289.
[47] *Kierkegaard* (G), 123.
[48] *Main Currents*, VI, 126–140, 151–197.

in his treatment of German Romanticism. The whole book he dedicated to this literary movement within the framework of his *Main Currents* is nothing but a protest against and a refutation of a poetic and human conception which he fails to understand, or so far as he does understand it abhors. Just as under the mask of the Proktophantasmist the enlightened rationalistic Nicolai watches, in Goethe's *Walpurgisnacht,* with disgusted amazement the uproar of the unchained demons, so Brandes is helpless in the face of a movement which has declared war on sound common sense, has plunged into those abysses of the soul where Ariadne's clue of reason is powerless.

> Taking all this together, one feels as if Romanticism ended in a sort of Witches' Sabbath in which the philosophers played the part of the old crones, amidst the thunders of the obscurantists, the insane yells of the mystics.[49]

No doubt he who clung rigidly to the Cartesian conception of the soul as consciousness, as thought, had to see a "Witches' Sabbath" in the Romantic attempt to place the center of man in the unconscious. He saw in "dreams, frenzy, hallucinations, madness . . . the powers which disintegrate the Ego, disconnect its links";[50] while the Romanticists exalted just these very forces as those by which the individual soul partook of the *Allseele.* He looked at the night as "one side of nature,"[51] while for the Romanticists it was the medium in which objects and individual souls freed themselves from the curse of individuation and merged with the unconscious unity of the infinite. Not recognizing that for the Romanticists the Middle Ages were a symbol of the great guiltless oneness of mankind, he had nothing better to say than that Romanticism "fell foolishly in love with the past and its childish naïveté."[52] Not once, throughout the whole book, has one the impression that he knew what the Romantic experiment really meant; and he is not even ready to admit that Romanticism has at least helped to conquer new realms of poetic feeling and expression.

> In the matter of language with their intangible imagery, their misuse of words in expressing the strange, weird, and mysterious, their archaisms and their determination to be unintelligible to the ordinary reader, they rather diminished than enriched the poetic vocabulary, rather corrupted than improved literary style.[53]

Romanticism is to him the great corrupting danger, a danger to

[49] *Main Currents,* II, 16.
[50] *Ibid.,* 172.
[51] *Ibid.,* 151.
[52] *Ibid.,* VI, 300.
[53] *Ibid.,* II, 5.

which unfortunately even Kleist succumbed, whose "clearness and definiteness . . . was disturbed and deranged by the poetic insanity of Romanticism.[54]

Is it then surprising that Rousseau, the father of European Romanticism, gets nothing but poor marks whenever his name is mentioned in Brandes' work? In spite of his own pantheism, he has not the slightest sympathy for this apostle of nature, because he senses in Rousseau's struggle against civilization only too clearly the frontal attack on the organizing and constructive forces of reason. It goes without saying that in the Voltaire book Rousseau has no chance as the antagonist of the hero, though the weapons Brandes uses against his opponent can hardly be called fair. What must one think when the apologist for Voltaire, whose firmness of character was more than doubtful, complains against Rousseau: "The champion of equality accepted the hospitality of a banker's wife"?[55] And one hardly trusts one's eyes when, ten pages later, in referring to Rousseau's refusal to take refuge in a mansion of the Prussian king one reads the words:

> Rousseau with the pride of the "poor-but-proud" would not accept anything: it would be impossible for him to sleep in a house that had been built by the hand of a King.[56]

But not only when he needs a dark background against which the profile of his hero may stand out all the more advantageously does he paint Rousseau in the blackest colors. So much is Brandes an adherent of civilization, a member of the "City of Man," that to him Rousseau's "Back to Nature" can mean nothing but a relapse into primitive barbarism, which one ought to fight solely with the weapons of ridicule.[57] He who knew German literature more thoroughly than almost any other foreign literary historian blames the young Goethe because he "had . . . the poor taste to prefer, at this period of life, the Swiss Rousseau to native French writers,"[58] as if he did not know how low the level of German literature had been under the influence of the "native French writers," and what an unforgettable share Rousseau and his spirit had had in the development and flowering of German letters.

[54] *Ibid.*, 258.

[55] *Voltaire*, II, 87.

[56] *Ibid.*, 97.

[57] ". . . a proclamation of reaction. Rousseau desired to return to the state of Nature, when men roamed naked through the pathless forests and lived upon acorns." (*Main Currents*, II, 72.)

[58] *Goethe*, I, 209.

Is it going too far to credit also his love of the South, manifesting itself so vividly in his autobiography, in his travel-book *Hellas,* to his rationalistic bias? But does it not equally testify to his passion for the clear, the distinct and the unambiguous? Here he witnessed the beauty of balance and form in genuine purity and the simplicity of outline; the clean articulation of shape filled him with a delight similar to that which the great Rationalists felt when dealing with mathematical problems.

III

We have already pointed out in a different connection how wrong it would be to see in Brandes exclusively the representative of empirical positivism. We shall have to show now to what a strong degree he was dominated by a radical philosophy of the will, by an idealism of freedom, which came constantly into conflict with his scientific deterministic attitude.

All his life long he remained loyal to the sentence which at the age of seventeen he put down in his diary:

> There is only one decisive factor on earth: the will, led by intelligence.[59]

And the older he became, the more this sentence took on the character of his most personal confession. Even Carlyle's hero-worship may at times seem tame compared with idolization of the great personality, which we encounter at every step in Brandes' work. It struck him like lightning when he read the first lines of Nietzsche; and it is not just chance that he became the first passionate propagandist for Nietzsche, that he was the first, in his lectures on Nietzsche, to call the attention of the European public to the prophet of the "superman," at a time when Nietzsche was still generally decried as a dangerous fool or a ridiculous muddlehead.[60] So thoroughly did he succumb to Nietzsche's influence that he was ready to burn what he had worshipped, to turn against Mill's utilitarianism,[61] and to speak with contempt of those who until then had been his allies.

[59] *Levned,* III, 144.

[60] As late as 1895, Hjalmar Boyesen could state in his paper on Brandes (*Essays on Scandinavian Literature,* 213): "Nowhere has he unmasked so Mephistophelian a countenance as in his essays on Luther and on an obscure German iconoclast Friedrich Nietschke (sic!). It is difficult to understand how a man of well-balanced brain and a logical equipment second to none can take *au sérieux* a mere philosophical savage who dances a war dance amid what he conceives to be the ruins of civilization, swings a reckless tomahawk and knocks down everybody and everything that comes in his way."

[61] *Nietzsche,* 23.

People are still busy with the same doctrines, certain theories of heredity, a little Darwinism, a little emancipation of woman, a little morality of happiness, a little freethought, a little worship of democracy.[62]

What has become of his admiration for John Mill and Bentham, of his belief in "the greatest happiness of the greatest number," when he could write:

The answer to the question of culture, how the individual human life may acquire its highest value and its greatest significance, must be by living for the benefit of the rarest and most valuable examples of the human race.[63]

What else is his own life but a permanent endeavor in the service of the superman, a Pantheon for the rulers of the spirit and the world: Shakespeare, Voltaire, Goethe, Michelangelo, Lassalle, Lord Beaconsfield, Napoleon, Garibaldi, and Caesar? Read his hymns to Caesar, not only in the great book which he dedicates to him, but whenever he finds an opportunity for paying homage to the ruler of the world. It is easy to see why he fills so many pages with protestations against Shakespeare's portrait of Caesar, taken over from Plutarch, who extolled the treacherous, ambitious and petty-minded Brutus at the expense of the hero. So much is he impressed by the greatness of a personality that he is even ready to admire when faced with a political or ideological antagonist, provided only the enemy be great. Although a declared opponent of Prussian militarism, he has even a certain sympathy for Bismarck;[64] and in Paris he falls out with an old friend of his because he had defended Moltke against her attacks,[65] the same Moltke who, though a former Danish subject, had been chiefly responsible for the mutilation of Denmark from which Brandes suffered so deeply. However much he loathed the philosophical and political convictions of Joseph de Maistre, he sincerely admired this reckless reactionary, who had the courage of his own odiousness and did not try to disguise his atrocious philosophy.[66] Even the repulsive is beautiful provided it be great; and faced with the alternative of choosing between a good average person and a gigantic monster, he decides for the monster, Richard III.[67]

With Brandes extreme individualism assumed an almost religious form. For this very reason Byron and Shelley signified a

[62] *Ibid.*, 55.
[63] *Ibid.*, 15.
[64] *Levned*, II, 119.
[65] *Ibid.*, 344.
[66] *Main Currents*, III, 111–113; *ibid.*, II, 12; *Levned*, II, 151. With reference to Gentz, *Main Currents*, VI, 316.
[67] *Shakespeare*, I, 163.

turning point in the whole of European literature,[68] because in them forces were set free which made possible the emancipation of the individual from all ties and restrictions. With this deep religious belief in the freedom and emancipation of the individual from all external conditions, Brandes was bound soon to come into conflict with Taine and his theory of environment. In spite of all his devotion to the spirit of science, he had to protest against a doctrine which threatened the freedom of the will.

> Did the consistent determinism of modern science, the discovery of an unalterable interdependency in the intellectual as in the physical world, allow scope for actions proceeding otherwise than merely illusorily from the free purposes or determination of the individual?[69]

Individualism is the most precious possession of mankind; and the reason for the cowardly tameness of our culture he attributes to the "disintegration of individuality which the modern order of society involves."[70] And do not also the poisonous invectives launched in his *Shakespeare* against the Baconian theory[71] originate above all in the endeavor to save Shakespeare as an "individuality," and to protect him from the vilification which anonymity would mean from Brandes' point of view?

It is for this reason that the man of antiquity, who in noble harmony gives free rein to his instincts and abilities, and is not yet conscious of the Jewish-Christian "Thou shalt not," becomes the object of his intense admiration, carried over to the Renaissance, which, marked by the revolution of the individual against all restrictions, represents the period of highest human fulfillment. His autobiography, his works are filled with his allegiance to the Graeco-Pagan ideal of man; his *Michelangelo* is nothing but a hymn to the Renaissance. This Renaissance ideal of free human beings he rejoicingly rediscovers in Shakespeare; and with a biting sharpness he scorns Eduard von Hartmann, the "philosopher of philistinism" who objected to the character of Juliet because he found in her only "purely sensuous passions."[72]

To this gospel of the great personality, of the superman who does not stop short of full self-realization, corresponds a contempt for the masses which knows no bounds. He never misses an opportunity to expose the stupidity and inertia of the "compact ma-

[68] *Main Currents*, I, ix.
[69] *Reminiscences*, 230. Another attack on Taine in *Nietzsche*, 11 (note).
[70] *Nietzsche*, 17. [71] *Shakespeare*, I, 104. [72] *Ibid.*, 102.

jority''; and in reading his books, one can hardly rid oneself of a painful impression caused by the monotony of his fits of hatred. It is true he himself had to suffer to an incredible extent from reactionary pettiness. For five full years he had to live in voluntary exile because the indignation against him assumed such proportions that he no longer felt safe in Denmark. Reading in his autobiography of the attacks to which he was exposed all through his life—and he fills pages and pages with these anecdotes—we feel ourselves at times confronted with a man suffering from persecution mania. And if we did not possess corroborating statements from others,[73] we would hardly think it possible that a person who fought with such integrity and courage for his convictions could be the object of so much hatred. He was the ''enemy of the people'';[74] but the unrestrained attacks of the ''compact majority'' were equalled by Brandes' reactions. Is it possible that he, the friend of all the great men in Europe, the literary critic whose fame was second to none in the whole world, the man whom the Poles worshipped almost as a national hero, whom the young generation idolized to such a degree that a radical Danish Student Organization put to its new members the question: ''Do you believe in God or do you believe in Brandes?''[75]—is it possible that such a man was seized with frenzy when attacked by a local paper of the small Danish town of Aarhus?[76] His hatred of man knew no bounds, and it will not surprise us that his plan to write a book on Shakespeare grew out of his preoccupation with *Timon of Athens*.[77]

However, this *odi profanum vulgus* is again but one aspect of Brandes. The passionate admiration for the great personality,

[73] One of innumerable examples: Gosse tells us (*op. cit.*, 284) that during his stay in Denmark he did not dare to confess to his host that he knew Brandes and was with him frequently. And when one day Brandes, contrary to the agreement, called on him, his host's sister, who had recognized the vistor, behaved as if Satan in person had appeared to her. Gosse had to ask Brandes explicitly never to repeat this attempt, otherwise he would have lost the friendship of his host.

[74] Hermann Weigand (*The Modern Ibsen*, New York, 1925, 102) very rightly dismisses the question whether Brandes was the model of Ibsen's *Enemy of the People* as irrelevant. But in this connection it may be of interest that Ibsen himself told Brandes that he had been thinking of him when writing the play. (*Levned*, III, 262.) [75] *Levned*, (D), II, 80. [76] Nathansen, *op. cit.*, 143.

[77] "But the part alone which I felt passionately urged to work out and wrestled with for five years was the first half of part three, that has its climax in *Timon of Athens* whose emotions and views were then my own." *Levned*, III, 301.

the violent contempt of the mob are interspersed with an incredibly sensitive social conscience, with a bold defense of the rights of the oppressed and those neglected by fate. From his earliest childhood the sight of poverty and human suffering nearly causes him physical pain,[78] and it is certain that neither Byron and Shelley nor the authors of Young Germany would have stood so close to his heart had they not been the champions of social justice, of the liberation of the oppressed Poles and Greeks. He was an "enemy of the people," but moved by a deep love for the people, like the prophets of the Bible who chastised men out of concern for their happiness and the salvation of their souls. It is true that this mixture of love and hatred expressed itself in the strangest forms: one day a desperate pessimism, the conviction that everything was futile, that belief in progress was nothing but a vain illusion; and the next a return to the battlefield, which would have been impossible had the outburst of despair really sprung from the depth of his soul. His book on the war is full of these contradictions. On the one hand the belief that nations have been innocent victims of criminally irresponsible diplomats,[79] on the other the conviction that the greed and stupidity of man had automatically to lead to this war.[80] One day the comment: "A pessimist once remarked that humanity is a 'gang of brutes.' He was mistaken. Humanity is divided into a series of different gangs, all fighting each other, and each one trying to beat the others"[81]—and another the disavowal: "But let no one believe that I imply humanity will never rid itself of war."[82]

The same mixture of hatred and love characterizes his relation to Denmark. His outbursts of wrath against his country, against Copenhagen surpass all reasonable bounds, and yet, when after a voluntary exile of five years, he was invited to return, he jumped at the opportunity without hesitation, though a great future seemed to be waiting for him in Berlin, where even the imperial family had assured him of their favor and interest. He who did not weary of chastising his compatriots for their sins, blames Theodor Mommsen for overlooking in his criticism of the Danes "the good quali-

[78] *Reminiscences,* 101.

[79] *The World at War,* 215. Also William Archer, *Shirking the Issue,* Open Letter to George Brandes, 2.

[80] *The World at War,* 170.

[81] *Ibid.,* 172.

[82] *Ibid.,* 177.

ties."[83] And though but a guest in a foreign country, he does not miss a single opportunity in his public and private speeches to remind Prussia of the grave injustice done Denmark in taking North Sleswig from her.

The combination of hatred and love of humanity is also responsible for the inconsistency and elusiveness of his political attitude. He is a confirmed aristocrat, yet all his life an enemy of every brand of conservatism, a fighting protagonist of progressive government. He defends passionately the French Revolution against Nietzsche,[84] and reproaches the same French Revolution harshly for having sent "the best heads,"[85] because of their unmistakably aristocratic imprint, to the guillotine. In a political speech addressed to a leftist group in Denmark, he stresses the point that he does not want to be called a liberal, much less a democrat;[86] nevertheless, what is his whole life but a continuous struggle for liberalism and for the democratic freedom of nations and minds? This incompatibility of his political views seems to be drastically expressed in two letters which in a brief space of time he sent to an acquaintance of his in Paris. "J'ai pris part au combat constitutionel par simple conviction philosophique et par horreur des hommes qui ont brisé la loi et nullement par conviction démocratique," we read in one of his letters; in the other he states clearly and blatantly: "Je suis resté fidèle à la gauche et je le resterai."[87]

However strong his contempt of man may have been in the dark moments of his life, deep down he always believed in the necessity and meaningfulness of the fight for freedom. His pessimism is not of a metaphysical but of a moral nature; it is not the final word of one who is resigned to wisdom, but the passing impulse of an impatient man who is irritated by the slowness of progress. He never doubts that the mission has a meaning, that it has to be realized. It is only consistent that he should have recognized in Ibsen too this "indignation—pessimism" which has "its roots in a conviction of the possibility of the realization of the ideal."[88] Though he often believes mankind to be hopelessly lost in stupidity

[83] *Levned* (D), II, 262.
[84] *Nietzsche,* 37.
[85] *Voltaire,* II, 310.
[86] *Levned,* III, 81.
[87] Maurice Bigeon, *Les Révoltés Scandinaves,* 23.
[88] "Ibsen," *Creative Spirits,* 364. It is true, this essay was written in 1883, when Brandes could not yet have been acquainted with the *Wild Duck.* But in none of his later essays on Ibsen does Brandes refer to the poet's much more melancholy views with regard to the "realization of the ideal."

and indolence, he undauntedly defends the principle of "compulsory education" against Renan and his friends, and turns a deaf ear to the melancholy question of the sceptics: What good will it do?[89]

But however much he may change his opinions, his passionate belief in the nobleness of the spirit never wavers. In the hierarchy of human possibilities, the artist holds the supreme place. Art to him is not only a beautiful addition to life, but the highest blessing bestowed on mankind. Without any hesitation he calls Shakespeare "one of the greatest benefactors of the human race,"[90] though the term "benefactor" may strike us as strange in this connection. And Ibsen's heart-breaking lament over the lost happiness of life, the *Epilogue's* melancholy question whether so much resignation in the service of art was not a sin against life, Brandes fails to understand.[91] Since he saw in the spiritual mission the highest bliss of mankind, what but a whim of old age could make Ibsen question it? How can the artist dare to have doubts about himself as king in the world of man, "the truth's ordained priest"?[92]

IV

We have tried to outline the intellectual and emotional climate of Brandes' world. What remains is to inquire into his approach to the creative genius and the work of art. We shall not be surprised to discover that his was the approach of the positivistic literary critic, a method which, though by no means exploded even today, has become more and more untenable.

Those of us who have been influenced by Husserl's phenomenology, Bergson's metaphysics, Croce's aesthetics, no longer believe in the separation of *life* and *work,* which the nineteenth-century aesthetics had assumed. We see in the self-realization of the genius an indissoluble *Gestalt,* a primary function of life which in its essentials cannot be reduced to biographical dates offered by the external course of a poet's life. From our phenomenological standpoint, the ontological *Wesensschau* has replaced the psychological historical analysis.

To Brandes however life and work constitute a dual entity, which are only casually related to each other, two different substances which can be compared to each other, and in this way

[89] "Renan," *Creative Spirits,* 214.
[90] *Shakespeare,* II, 413.
[91] *Ibsenbuch,* 187.
[92] *The World at War,* 166.

mutually clarified. He openly adopted Sainte-Beuve's method: "the works illuminating the life, the life supporting and determining the works."[93] Particularly when direct biographical information about the poet is scarce, the work again and again has to furnish the missing data, the interpretation gives way to guesses as to the "hidden" personal experiences. He explicitly states that it has been the purpose of his *Shakespeare*

> to declare and prove that Shakespeare is not thirty-six plays and a few poems jumbled together but a man who felt and thought, rejoiced and suffered, brooded, dreamed and created,[94]

as though such proof were necessary, as though it helped us in the least to draw closer to the phenomenon Shakespeare. As he believes in the dualism of life and work, the construction of his books is not fundamentally different from the usual pattern of the nineteenth century literary criticism which used to alternate monotonously one chapter of biography with one chapter of critical analysis. It is true that he arranges his material somewhat more tastefully; but the jumping back and forth from the biographical to the interpretative aspect is only thinly veiled.

To Brandes the world of the creative genius is not a cosmos resting in itself, obeying its own laws, but the every-day reality which he copies with the help of certain formal means, be they of a naturalistic, romantic or idealizing nature. The artist is nothing but a good observer who by a happy accident has also the capacity to give shape to his observations. This conception of the artist is hardly to be expressed more pointedly than Brandes did in his characterization of Flaubert:

> He evidently possessed in an equally high degree the two elements that constitute the being of the artist: the gift of observation and the power of investing with form.[95]

It is for this reason too that he hardly ever conceives of a work of art as a self-sufficient creation, a *Gestalt* which has its real center in itself, directly accessible, thus sparing us the circuit of historical and psychological detail, but as a more or less arbitrary addition of inner or outer experiences and form. Where do we find the work obeying its own law, resting in itself like an organic unity, when Brandes points out the general lines which he followed in producing his collection of essays:

[93] Gosse, *op. cit.*, 289. [94] *Shakespeare*, II, 412.

[95] "Flaubert," *Creative Spirits*, 241—The same view is expressed in *Main Currents*, VI, 37.

The mode of treatment in these essays is greatly diversified. In some of them, the individuality of the author portrayed is represented as extensively as possible; in others, an attempt has been made to present the man in actual person before the eyes of the reader; some are purely psychological, others offer a fragment of aesthetics, others again are eminently biographical and historical.[96]

The individuality, the man, the person, psychological, biographical, historical: here we have the whole arsenal of concepts in which the positivist literary critic had made himself at home.

Brandes has hardly any notion of the mysterious wonders of genius, originating in δαίμον and ἀνάγκη. It is true, now and then we come across a statement which seems to lead into the very heart of the problem, an intuition which might bar the way to a biographical and psychological interpretation. But how isolated is such an insight as the following:

The nature of genius is an organically connected whole. Its weakness in one direction is the condition of its strength in another. It is impossible to alter any single particular without disturbing the entire machinery.[97]

And how lacking in consequences is this discovery when Brandes in the same essay compares genius to "a tangled skein . . . that we may unravel . . . from its coil if we but get hold of the outer end of the thread."[98] How superficial must have been his conception of genius as "an organically connected whole" if ten years later in his book on Kierkegaard he spends pages and pages lamenting that young Kierkegaard had not attended an English college, that he had been exposed to German speculation instead of to empiric philosophy, that he had inhaled the sticky and bigoted air of his father's house, unlike the young Stuart Mill who, guided by an enlightened natural scientist, had roamed through the open country.[99]

Again and again Brandes applies the principle of causality, the gospel of all natural science, to the process of intellectual creativeness. With a simplicity sometimes bordering on the childish, the great work of art is interpreted as the direct, consistent sediment of a concrete experience. So he traces back the religious passion of a Kierkegaard, the arresting struggle of a soul in quest of redemption, to the

sufferings he underwent at the time of his betrothal [untranslatably phrased

[96] *Eminent Authors of the 19th Century*, Introduction. [98] *Ibid.*, 13.
[97] "Anderson," *Creative Spirits*, 35. [99] *Kierkegaard*, 11, 12, 17, 34.

by Brandes: *"Verlobungs = und Leidensgeschichte"*], an experience that forms the basis of his purely esthetic and dispassionate investigations as well as of his strictly religious emotional essay.[100]

So he sees in Kierkegaard's turning to the Passion the result of the campaign by which the Danish humorous magazine *Korsar* tried to ridicule the great philosopher. And he explains young Heine's longing for death from the biographical fact that the boy Heine at this time was in love with Josepha, the daughter of an executioner.[101] These few examples must suffice to indicate Brandes' fundamentally mechanistic attitude, which in the spiritual world also relates everything to cause and effect. Brandes was never able to free himself from this approach; the urge to "explain" scientifically is ingrained in him and pervades his whole work.

The positivistic aestheticians, obsessed by the idea that the growth of a work of art would be thus "explained" conclusively, had surrendered completely to the notorious hunt for original models, for those sources which they collected with minute accuracy, convinced as they were that they could grasp the secret of a work of art by dissolving it into its various elements like a chemical compound. Compared to the philological zeal with which the nineteenth century ferreted out sources, the work of Brandes signifies a tremendous progress. Still even he relapses at times into the dissection-mania. For Shakespeare's *Tempest* he unearths no less than twelve sources,[102] while, in the course of the discussion of Gretchen's prayer in *Faust,* he reminds us of five Goethean reminiscences which found their way into the poem.[103] It would be unjust to overlook the surprising length to which Brandes had already gone beyond this hunt after sources. But the summative method, corresponding to the atomistic mechanistic attitude of the nineteenth century, trying to dissolve the wholeness of a work of art and of life into particles derived from psychological and biographic data, is fundamentally the method of Brandes also. No doubt, it is to his great credit that he kept his mind open to great vistas of ideas, that he had the courage to write a literary history of Europe at a time when literary historiography exhausted itself in collections of philological material, concentrating its interest on minutely detailed inquiries. But the totalities, the great monuments which he tries to construct, show only too blatantly the various single parts

[100] *Ibid.,* 73.
[101] *Main Currents,* VI, 119.
[102] *Shakespeare,* II, 370.
[103] *Goethe,* I, 300.

out of which they have been put together. Thus of the two great works of his old age, his book on Goethe is broken up into 140 small chapters representing almost as many fresh starts, and his *Voltaire* is anything but a well-integrated whole. To be sure, here he strives for a great unity; what he is after is not an isolated portrait but a monumental panorama of the period. Nevertheless, the long chapters which he fills with world history and petty court stories are unconnected with the figure of the hero. Again and again Voltaire disappears completely from the scene, and when we meet him again he seems to us an old acquaintance of whom we had lost sight. And are the *Main Currents*, the work of his mature manhood, essentially different? Do not these six volumes also fall apart into individual portraits, only superficially related to each other, and is the final product the truly comprehensive picture of the European spirit Brandes had wanted to draw? Paradoxically, Brandes achieves his purpose only in the part dedicated to German Romanticism, for which he cared little and which he understood less. Here he does not place portrait next to portrait, but tries, by means of a topical arrangement, to do justice to the essential factors of an intellectual movement. The words with which Bjoernson repudiates young Brandes' early critical efforts are certainly unjustified, for they neglect completely the tremendous ethical power which, aside from all "scientism," was ingrained in Brandes' work. But one fundamental trait of his criticism, the mechanistic and atomistic trend of his analyses, is clearly pointed out in Bjoernson's statement:

> It strikes me that if you do choose criticism as your avocation, it should be more strongly in the direction of one educating responsibilities and less as the spyer-out of small things, the dragger together of all and everything which can be brought forward as witness for or against the author. . . .[104]

So intimately had Positivism related the work of art to chemical and physical phenomena that to assort, to register and to explain facts appeared to be the task of the literary critic. With great eloquence, Taine had attempted to raise literary criticism to a science, subject to the same conditions and methods of research as biology, chemistry, and physics. The attitude of the literary "scientist" towards his object was therefore determined. He had to be disinterested, detached and unprejudiced, like the cool chemist who *sine ira et studio* follows the development of an experiment. He must not be involved, but must look at his problem from the

[104] *Reminiscences*, 225.

outside, his ideal position being the Archimedean point outside the world. Particularly in his younger years Brandes too saw strict detachment as the necessary condition of every critical effort. So he thought the Danish writer Goldschmidt to be in an especially favorable position,

> because the modern Jew in our European civilization has the inestimable advantage as a Semite to be standing on an Archimedian point with a wide perspective outside the congenital limitations of the two Aryan groups when it comes to the contrasts between the Romanic and the Gotho-Germanic cultures.[105]

And he regards himself as particularly well-qualified to write a literary history of Europe, because as a foreigner he has the necessary perspective which alone enables the scholar to attain scientific results.[106] In the course of years, however, Brandes more and more abandoned this point of view. That in a later edition of his *Aesthetiske Studier* he omits the passage quoted above, would still not be conclusive proof. In this case he was probably prompted chiefly by practical concerns, because he himself had been exposed only too often to the spiteful and ridiculous reproach that the spiritual essences of the "gotho-germanic culture" were closed to him as a Jew. But that in his introduction to *Creative Spirits* he vigorously rejects Taine's thesis of "criticism as an applied science," may be taken as valid proof. Here it dawns upon him that the real organ of literary criticism is not a cool observation which tries to maintain rigidly the distance between object and subject, but rather an intuitive process which, in a creative moment, merges object and subject into a real unity.[107]

V

We have tried to sketch the profile of Brandes. It is, as we have seen, no unified picture, full of lines which may seem to us strange or even bewildering. But how wrong would it be not to be aware of the greatness of this man and his work; for do not even the limitations of his achievement, which we have discussed, betray a great personality who stamps with his seal whatever he touches? And should the broadness of his horizon not compensate for a certain lack of depth which is, at times, disquieting? Brandes was a conqueror of new worlds; and who could expect from a force striving for expansion the calm of meditative profundity? He was, in terms of the climate of his times, an imperialist, an im-

[105] Nathansen, (G), *op. cit.*, 78.

[106] *Main Currents*, II, III.

[107] *Creative Spirits*, V.

perialist of the spirit who took possession of unknown countries and opened up new horizons. He was a pioneer who tore down boundary lines, a "missionary of culture," as Nietzsche so fittingly characterized him.[108]

His work belongs to the nineteenth century; and however high it may tower above the average, it lacks the touch of the immortal which might make us forget how closely it is tied up with a definite period, how inevitably prone to the destiny of becoming "historical." But the fire that burnt in him, his passion for truth, his enthusiastic willingness to serve the spirit in whatever form it revealed itself, are timeless, and will keep his name alive even if his work should sink into oblivion. His critical conceptions and analyses may be superseded tomorrow; but his instinct for the truly great, his fight for the recognition of the new will testify for him. That in spite of all his bias he was the first to raise his voice for Kierkegaard, that he made a stand for Ibsen, Nietzsche, Strindberg at a time when they saw themselves confronted with cold indifference or violent opposition, weighs a hundred times more heavily than the fact that his critical arguments and methods may often fail to convince us. He was a great discoverer, and he had the courage of his discoveries.

When but a young man, he had to experience what it means to profess one's convictions without bowing to public opinion and showing a bigoted reference for tradition. He wanted to disturb the "sleep of the world" and he did not flinch from the blows with which all those who did not want to be awakened struck him. He was willing to change his opinions, but never to make concessions. When he first met Ibsen, the poet took leave of him, saying: "Irritate the Danes, and I shall irritate the Norwegians."[109] Brandes did more than his share. He not only irritated minds but made them boil with rage, in Denmark as well as in all Europe. Wherever a struggle was taking place against stupidity and for the freedom of the spirit, he was in it. He spoke on matters of literature, religion, philosophy, domestic and foreign policy. At the age of seventy-five, he made his voice heard in the great struggle of the nations. France, which he loved so dearly, Clemenceau, his most intimate friend, called him a traitor because he refused to see in

[108] *Nietzsche*, 64.

[109] *Levned* (D), II, 55. For the relationship of Brandes to Ibsen *cf.* also A. E. Zucker, *Ibsen* (New York, 1929), 149, 158, 178.

the Germans nothing but a horde of brutes; England wanted to forget his name, because he had the courage to remind her, on the occasion of the storm of moral indignation over Belgium, of her policy in Persia; Germany opened the gates of hatred against him, because he, now louder than ever, gave vent to his abhorrence of the imperial policy; Poland decried him, because he called her to account for her treatment of the Jews. But he remained undaunted, for he had the courage to stand by the truth. He was fearless, and he loved fearlessness in others. Even the German Romanticists, who seemed so alien and unhealthy to him, called forth his respect because they had dared to set out on untrodden paths and to pursue them even if they led to defeat and ruin.[110]

He stood unflinchingly by his convictions; but that does not mean that he ever became a slave to his opinions. By this very agility of spirit he not only irritated his enemies, but also his friends. Had he not but recently carried on a passionate campaign for Mill and Taine? Yet he was already welcoming a new star: Nietzsche. Had he not but recently extolled Flaubert as the exemplary novelist? Yet he was already fascinated by a force of a quite different nature: Dostojevsky. He was a Socialist with Lassalle and a Conservative with Beaconsfield, a worshipper of the Renaissance with Shakespeare and Michelangelo and a rigid rationalist with Voltaire, a great democrat with Boerne and Garibaldi and a great autocrat with Caesar and Napoleon. His mind was constantly in motion, and it was as though every weak sound trembling in the air gave echo in him, so early that it seemed as if the vibration in the atmosphere of the time reached him more quickly and more directly than others. Always out for the discovery of new shores, he was much more than he would have cared to admit to himself in sympathy with Ibsen's confession: "Yes, I may well say the one thing I love in freedom is the struggle for its attainment. Its possession does not greatly concern me."[111]

He was, as he said himself, "the most restless and most impatient of men."[112] Just as he could not bring himself to settle down quietly, so he found it hard to balance his emotions. The shifts

[110] "He who discovers a new country may, in the course of his explorations, be stranded on a reef. It is an easy matter to avoid the reef and to leave the country undiscovered" (*Main Currents*, II, 10).

[111] *Letters of Henrik Ibsen*, 205.

[112] Nathansen, *op. cit.* (G), 224.

from deepest depression to euphoric self-assertion are frightening, the change from satisfaction with his own achievement to despair at his failures uncanny. He was, as he said of his hero Voltaire, "a bundle of nerves, charged with electricity, captivating Europe and enlightening it."[113]

He was so full of intensity, of wild passion that he often believed he would perish of it. "Ma pensée comprimée me tue, exprimée elle me perd," he confessed to his friend Edmund Gosse.[114] It is not by chance that he had chosen as a symbol of his life the flame, the blazing fire, that he uses, as a motto for the *Main Currents,* Heinse's words: "As for me, I am fire, always and everywhere."

He wanted to be and he was a bearer of light. He dispelled darkness, he broadened our horizon, he discovered new stars and dispersed the mist which impaired their brightness. His writings may be forgotten, but not the light which the existence of this man shed over our world. In the last poem of his *Samlede Skrifter,* Brandes has summed up the meaning of his life in a few lines, which at first glance may strike us as melancholy. But he surely has achieved great things who *sub specie aeternitatis* is able to say of his life:

A shimmer of day
In the dark of a cave,
Impalpable spray
Like foam on the wave,
Such my life's core,
Of lightning a ray,
And hardly more.

Smith College.
(Now serving with the U. S. Army).

[113] *Voltaire,* I, 3.
[114] Gosse, *op. cit.,* 157.

GERMAN PROPHETS OF DOOM AND HOPE

By Richard Kuehnemund

Of all peoples, Germany reveals in its history the sharpest contrasts between rapid rises and precipitous declines. For centuries her soil has been the physical and spiritual battleground for many decisive issues. The marks of the Reformation and of its gruesome aftermath, the Thirty Years' War, as well as those of the uprising against Napoleon and the spirit of the Western revolutions, are indelibly engraved upon her mental physiognomy. For her more than for any other nation, the problem of Decline with all its implications has always pressed upon her very being the sense of the tragic irony of life. No wonder that her thinkers have taken the issue to heart; that in the hour of danger they have searched their souls and raised their voices with stern reproofs and passionate pleas to their countrymen.

Moreover, most great German art and thought has been essentially directed inward upon itself: it has been, in a peculiar degree, a long endeavor of the individual to fathom his own inner nature and the deeper significance of his own existence. And this persistent self-searching has been accompanied by an intense racial self-consciousness; to know oneself has meant, for a German, to know what is essential and distinctive in "the German spirit." Thus from Luther, through Goethe and Fichte and Hegel and Wagner, to Nietzsche and Spengler, the favorite theme has always been: what is German, and what am I?—and, as corollary to these questions: what is the specific rôle, the vocation and the destiny, of the German mind and the German people in world-history? In the present century, with its disillusionments, its vast chaos of conflicting ideas and ideals, its immensely accelerated tempo of historic change, these questions have become for reflective Germans more pressing and poignant than ever. We may take as representatives of differing reactions of German minds—differing, and yet all expressive of tendencies having their roots deep in the past experience and the historical characteristics of the German people—to the trend of the present age, four figures, Oswald Spengler and Thomas Mann, Count Keyserling and Stefan George, with men like Schopenhauer and Nietzsche as forerunners of the more

recent past. For they reflect for us, as in a symbol, the struggle of the truly tragic German spirit, with its perpetual vision of a greater tomorrow and its ever-present apprehensions of stagnation, of decline and doom.

Oswald Spengler arrives where Nietzsche would have ended had not his dream of Greece and the vision of the Superman stood in his way. For, out of the abyss of Nietzsche's *Götzendämmerung* gloom, out of his total rejection of German culture in the *Abendröte* mood, there still rings his tragic lament of frustrated hope: "There is something about the Germans that could be Hellenic," i.e., humanly perfect. By a final and stupendous effort, since Greece appeared to him irretrievably lost to the temper of modern man, he then made his pre-Socratic Hellenism of Dionysian hue the basis of his vision of the Superman, an attempt unique in magnitude, full of heroic courage in the face of Fate, which only Spengler's fortitude of heart could equal. Both Nietzsche and Spengler are fighters to the core, though for different ends. For Spengler preaches fortitude in the face of the fulfilment of our final destiny, which to him spells decline and doom; whereas Nietzsche strives to build anew over the shattered remnants of our decadent civilization into a most distant beyond. But *amor fati* keeps Nietzsche and Spengler on a common ethical plane. "Man is something that has to be surpassed," preaches Nietzsche, the prophet and idealist. Man has to fulfill his destiny courageously, as a soldier makes his last stand for a hopeless cause, knowingly embracing his doom; that is the triumph of inner greatness, teaches Spengler, the intuitive determinist and realist. He knows that the past is past and cannot be reborn; for all living organisms and all individual cultures as such, have their inherent law of life, their unalterable and unchangeable course; such is the irreversible unity of Fate. Attempt to escape it, be it by flight into fancies or by ignoring its dread realities, is in Spengler's eyes as cowardly as it is futile. Fate is fulfilled whether we wish it or not. We can accept it willingly and thus free ourselves inwardly from it, or we can be crushed in its course; there is no other choice. We, the last stragglers of a belated culture, have the unique and terrible advantage of knowing our fate, of being able to go down with open eyes.

Thus Spengler's concept of Decline is closely linked with his relativity of history as well as with his concept of Fate, because

decline, historical completion, means the end, the final fulfilment of Fate.

In his essay on Pessimism Spengler undertakes to refute the common charge that his philosophy of history is one-sided, pessimistic and determinstic. Pessimism, he replies, means to have lost and forsaken all tasks and aims. But there are innumerable tasks still before us, much as they may differ from those of preceding generations. Art—yes, but in concrete and steel! poetry—yes, but by men of iron nerves and unfailing will and realism! exclaims the lover of the Gothic, of Goethe, Beethoven, Bach and Brahms. Times without productive philosophy and art can yet be great. Better no new philosophy and art than shabby substitutes and pseudo-arts, Spengler holds. He sees but one type of decline that is truly suicidal: the decline of the will—of the will to action and the will to triumph against the forces of an adverse fate. This is certainly not the tenor of Schopenhauer's "futile and in vain"; it is the Faustian of Nietzsche's "And Yet"!

Spengler's interpretation of history as a sequence (or simultaneity) of independent cultural organisms, which rise, mature and decline by virtue of their individual inherent life-law, leaves little choice indeed as to the course of our future fate. With Schopenhauer he denies that the "history of mankind" has any inherent logic at all, that it has either meaning or aim. The over-optimistic trust in mankind's unending progress is shallow, absurd, and utterly without historic foundation. Only the life-cycles of those organic entities called "cultures" have historic aims, direction, meaning and fate.

By comparison with previous cultures, Spengler then proceeds to prognosticate at length the inevitable future course of Western civilization, which may vary in *tempo* alone from that of its forerunners in history. He claims for himself the inestimable merit of having opened our eyes for the first time to the proper perspective upon the facts of history, to their unrepeatable character, to their inner logical inevitableness. His ominous *Urworte* spell: time, direction, tactics, physiognomic tact, life, compulsion, and fate. The oneness of all being and occurring is the form in which Fate reveals itself to human eyes. From such a view all chance is banished, ἀνάγκη prevails in his world. And why do individual cultures alone possess such fateful significance in history? Be-

cause, as living organisms, they possess an inner unity of purpose, aim and understanding, by virtue of their common vitality, initiative and will.

To interpret Spengler's concept of Decline with all the implications we face to-day, we must consider his theories of society and the state. We are living in no mere "crisis," Spengler asserted more than twenty years ago, but in the midst of a catastrophe of stupendous proportions. We have just entered the era of World Wars which will reshape the form of the world, and are moving towards the *imperium mundi,* the last phase of white race world-domination. *Amor fati,* henceforth, means not to shrink from reality, to embrace the tragic view of life. Optimism will be cowardice, and scepticism is our last attitude. Life will be once more a struggle on a tremendous scale in which "peace is a wish and war is a fact." In this gigantic gamble between races and nations, with everything at stake, we have to learn again that true statesmanship, great politics, means the complete mastery of the "art of the possible."

Germany is the borderland between East and West, Asia and Europe. As such she has always held a peculiar cultural and political mission. Yet—and here we seem to hear Nietzsche once more —Germany's political thinking has been meager so far, lacking in realism, full of ideologies and fearful of reality. But in history sound instincts and the will of the strong decide. The Nordic political instinct is based on the will to property, to power through possession. Only ideologists dream of justice, eternal peace, and the happiness of the greatest number. Political romanticism is a sign of weakness: Liberalism, Communism, and Pacifism, are alike sentimental. We have to abandon the theories of the last one hundred and fifty years if we wish to survive, for they have all failed. For a century and a half society and state have been systematically undermined. Thus we have forgotten that both are based on a *natural* order; that they are the vital organs of the cultural organism, and not mechanical contrivances, set up at random and kept going at will.

Decline of state authority is a symptom of the loss of the natural social instinct and moral stamina of Western man. This results necessarily in social chaos and economic collapse: from it stem all revolutions. The state, the "being-in-form" of a people, means

strength, unity and leadership. The state—it is "the inner order for an outer end"; and this end is power. Its contrary spells formlessness, decline in every direction.

Human society, on the other hand, is based on the natural instinct for the *in*equality of men; for the natural order of inner rank and value, once freely acknowledged by all. Hence social decline means the trend towards the destruction of this natural order. Nineteenth-century Liberalism already displays all the tendencies towards Nihilism. From the Bastille to Soviet Moscow is one straight road, whether we admit it or not, holds Spengler. The final goal was always anarchy, economic chaos and communism which, in turn, tend toward a one-man dictatorship as their only solution. For one hundred and fifty years political rationalism has been striving for liberation *from* the state with the aim of leveling down the old, natural order. Political democracy and parliamentarism mean the bankruptcy of strong state authority and efficiency, disguised under the slogan of "the rule of the people." In reality, true statesmanship is lacking, political opportunism, dilettantism and economic selfishness prevail. Yet, without strong politics there is no sound economy. Thus parliamentarism promotes the decline of the state which the army once preserved. Even wars are being waged now for economic advantage, and "peace treaties" continue this warfare with different means.

To this Spengler adds the "Revolution of Labor" of the last one hundred years. A political *Bohême* has arisen preaching class-hatred and equality with the view of reducing the natural order in accordance with achievement and distinction to the level of the mob, with the "dictatorship of the proletariat" as its ultimate goal. A wage-Bolshevism has been instituted with strikes as its weapon and with the economic ruin of private initiative plainly in view. That is the sinister "Revolution from Below." Unemployment and inflation follow in its wake.

The literary form of this long-drawn process toward Bolshevization is called "Naturalism," a movement whose "heroes" are the sick, the physically, mentally, and socially misfit, and the poor, exploited and enslaved wage-earner; in short, the proletarian as the one and only truly human being. Such types have been made the new saints, pets and idols of a "fourth-class" literature. Along with it, the old *ethos* of work has been undermined, for work is no

longer valued as man's best pride and chief purpose in life. On the contrary, it is branded a curse to be shunned and has been degraded to the level of a commodity of political barter.

Adding to this the ominous signs of the "Colored Revolution" just looming over the horizon from Asia and Africa, we have the symptoms and causes of the "Decline of the West," as Spengler sees them. Is there any way out?

The one and only hope for the rise of a new spirit able to cope with the last phases of our approaching doom, Spengler sees in the triumph and spread of what he terms "Prussian Socialism." It is a spirit not nationally bound, and can manifest itself on the Thames as on the Spree or on the Ohio. In fact, England has known it well in the course of her agitated history. Moreover, it is a spirit ethical to the core, inherent in the genius of our race, and has nothing in common with ephemeral political aims and aspirations. Spengler, the Bavarian by choice, calls it "Prussian" in order to emphasize the region of its most striking manifestation. Basically, it is an *ethos* of the will, and has been alive in the best of our race throughout the course of Western history. As such, it has become an inalienable part of the German spirit, Spengler asserts, and has manifested itself again and again at great historic moments. Its working in the individual Spengler attempts to define by quoting the soldier, Count Schlieffen: "To talk little; to achieve much; to be more than one appears to be." That, Spengler holds, is *Haltung:* not an empty pose and gesture, but self-discipline; a sense of duty, of truly Christian humility; of honor and self-sacrifice; an inner freedom gained from willing devotion to a supra-personal cause. Such spirit, he avows, will be able to conquer the sinister forces of the present World Revolution. It embraces, in a way, the ideals of ancient Rome as well as Nietzsche's will-to-power, ethically bound.

Yet in spite of their kinship in "soldierly" spirit, the difference between Nietzsche and Spengler in political creed is most pronounced. Nietzsche's strongly individualistic "every man first for himself" is in strong contrast with the Prussian "each for all, and all for one," to which Spengler adheres. For Nietzsche, the early advocate of a "United States of Europe," nationalism and imperialism are and remain grave dangers engendering narrowness of view and heart, hampering sound cultural advancement and

intercourse. The state is for him as much a danger to the individual as a benefit. To Spengler, however, the state means the social disciplining of the individual under guarantee of free initiative of property and person. It is the natural organ of ordered society, the one and only safeguard of cultural and material advancement. Nietzsche's political feelings are Greek, and Spengler's Roman. They differ fundamentally as to the purpose, function and goal of human society. Nietzsche strives, first of all, to promote the great individual at the expense of the mass. Spengler strives to further the concerns of the group through the medium of those naturally endowed for leadership. Thus Nietzsche, the "good cosmopolitan," hates everything about the Prussian spirit and state but its soldierliness. To Spengler, the "socialist," Prussianism is a spiritual source, a sound instinct and view of life, an ultimate guarantee for the honorable future—and exit—of our race, the promise of the final defeat of political and mental particularism. In it he sees blended Kant's categorical imperative, Nietzsche's scorn for individual happiness, and Hegel's sound political realism. "Socialism," Spengler knows, "means something different in every land: the Prussian worker is the only born socialist, therefore he has been the fool of all others."

With such views at heart, Spengler foresees the ethico-socialistic state of the future as in the Prussian tradition, with the will to conquer, to dominate, and—to die. Such a state, he holds, is Germany's final mission; her last and only inner possibility in a world fraught with all the dangers of decline and impending doom.

But why, one is tempted to ask, this ever-lasting quest for "Form"? Why this constant self-search of the German spirit, unless it is perpetually aware of an inherent formlessness, of the dangers of chaos deep within itself? And further, why does this concept of Decline have such particular appeal for the Germans?

Even Luther spoke of the "ever-impending danger of relapse into chaos and barbarism" on the part of the German spirit. Nietzsche speaks of this spirit as having its "caves and hind-caves"; and he remarks, as if by way of self-castigation: "The German is always of yesterday and of the day after tomorrow; he has, as yet, no today." Both Spengler and Nietzsche view the German as an eternally restless, romantic world-rover and spiritual particularist; a perpetual "protestant" and conscientious

objector in the face of the rest of the world. Only the faith in its own mission, the undying vision of a new way of life, can save this spirit from chaos and utter self-destruction. Faust is of such a nature. This trust in Germany's vocation we find in Spengler's "Prussian Socialism" as much as in Nietzsche's Zarathustra-vision. This eternal becoming and self-transformation has made the German mind the sphinx of Europe, just as Russia has been, and is today, the Asiatic sphinx. This inner unrest and threat of "formlessness" has always engendered the danger of self-destruction. How often in their lives did Frederick the Great, the Goethe of *Werther* and *Faust,* Kleist, Nietzsche, and the countless lesser "romanticists," think of suicide?

Only a few great Germans have ever been men of definite "Form." Goethe was seeking it all his life. This search for, and process of, "forming" is the very core of his concept of *Bildung.* Herein lies the tragic duality and inner discord of the "Faustian" spirit. It is, once more, the romantic German genius in its eternal quest for genuine "culture," for "the land of Greece" as Nietzsche saw it in his dearest dreams. But there also is in it the insurmountable fear of finality, since "form" means completion, fulfilment and—death. For beyond completion there is no further hope, there is only decline. Nietzsche, perhaps the most subtle interpreter of the German spirit since Goethe, because he was the subtlest self-analyst, knew all the tragic lures and snares of Dionysian ecstasy and self-abandonment. Thus he longed, more desperately than any other German, for Apollonian *sophrosyne,* self-restraint and perfection. The sound synthesis of both was the vision of Goethe's sublime humanity, an aim so hard for Germans to achieve. And yet it is the one and only, though truly superhuman, self-redemption of this enigmatic German spirit.

Between the nineteenth-century thinkers and the moral crisis today stands also the lonely, venerable and tragic figure of Spengler's great antagonist, Thomas Mann. To him, as their preceptor in aesthetic form and taste, the pre- and post-War generations of German youth owe a perhaps profounder feeling of indebtedness and gratitude than to any other recent German thinker. Mann has pondered deeply upon the German spirit, upon the meaning and values of human culture, upon the problems and symptoms of decline. For almost half a century, his heart has been a spiritual

battleground, and he knows that the fight is not over. Thus he has become the last great German "protestant" at the end of an era of crises and catastrophe: a restless searcher and wanderer between the times, a Nietzschean supra-German of unfaltering conscience and courage, a Schopenhauerian Wagnerite with a nostalgia for Mozart's delicate simplicity of soul. Thus he is to-day not only one of the most highly cultured Germans, but the protagonist *par excellence* of the very best that ever dwelt within the German spirit. Knowing deep within himself its "caves and hindcaves," its inner discords, he has pleaded and warned and presaged more and more emphatically at the threshold of decline and collapse. The record of this inner conflict, his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen,* has become a landmark in the history of the struggle of the German mind, an emphatic and desperate protest against the dangers threatening from within and without. Through the subtle and artistic medium of Mann's aesthetic irony, Schopenhauer's sceptical pessimism has triumphed once more. Slowly but constantly, the scope of Mann's perspective has widened, from the psychic perplexities of the individual spectator, through the degeneration of whole families and social groups, to the decline of national culture and of an entire civilization. To be sure, the "being-so-and-not-otherwise" of a character, this fateful and perplexing aggregation of heterogeneous mental, psychic, and social components that make for individuality, has always demanded his first thought. But with the widening of his scope, his conscience, his sense of duty and responsibility, have also grown and deepened.

In his recent novel, *Lotte in Weimar* (The Beloved Returns), Mann has voiced once more, and most forcibly, his love, his scorn and faith, his fears and hopes and bitter disappointments, concerning his native land. To be sure, between him and his Germany of the past lie the years of his exile and sorrows. Moreover, in *Lotte in Weimar* Mann speaks through the medium of the ageing Goethe. Yet what his Goethe has to tell in his remarkable soliloquy about the Germans, about the artist-art relation, about Mann's inexhaustible problem of genius and the masses, seems to pertain much more appropriately to the Thomas Mann of 1940 than to the calm and tolerant Goethe of a century and three decades ago.

Thus soliloquizes Mann through his illustrious medium:

> . . . your aloofness from the Germans, your perception of their vulgar strain; that scurvy misbegotten race—out of it, in spite of it, you take

your life; your antipathy for it gnaws at a thousand roots that feed your very being. So you lead this unspeakably precarious life: called to their instruction, isolated not only by your station but from the very outset by your instinct; grudgingly respected and honoured, carped at wherever they can! Don't I know they find me a burden, one and all? How could I appease them? It should be possible—sometimes it has been. For in your bones there is so much Sachs and Luther marrow; you even take a defiant pleasure in the fact, yet the very stamp and seal of your mind drives you to lift and lighten it with all your gift of irony and charm of words. So they mistrust your German soul and you; they feel it an abuse, your fame is a source among them of hate and anguish. . . . That they hate clarity is not right. That they do not know the charm of truth, lamentable indeed. That they so love cloudy vaporing and berserker excesses, repulsive; wretched that they abandon themselves credulously to every fanatic scoundrel who speaks to their baser qualities, confirms them in their vices, teaches them "nationality," while meaning thereby barbarism and isolation. To themselves they seem great and glorious only when they have gambled away all that they had worth having. They look with jaundiced eyes on those whom foreigners love and respect, seeing in them the true Germany. No—I will not appease them. They do not like me—so be it, neither do I like them; we are quits. What I have of Germany I will keep, and may the devil fly away with them and the philistine spite they think is German! They think they are Germany—but I am. Let the rest perish root and branch, it will survive in me. Do your best to fend me off, still I stand for you. But the thing is, I was born far more apt for appeasement than for tragedy. Appeasement, compromise—are they not all my striving?[1]

And, after this outburst of truly Nietzschean invectives of anti- and supra-Germanism (or anti-Nazism?!), Mann-Goethe continues:

So then the tragedy falls away, falls down below where no mastery yet is, where my Germany is not yet, for my Germany consists in this very dominion and mastery, she represents it—for that sort of Germany is freedom, is culture, universality, love. All this is no less true because as yet they do not know it. . . . [And later on once more:] . . . truly German, to censure German ways with German words. Make a bargain with authority, then so act as to establish a better, nobler, higher order of things on earth. . . .

Yet Thomas Mann, the great preserver, interpreter and advocate of everything genuine and best in culture—he who longs so deeply for a new German freedom, for culture and universality—

[1] From the English translation published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. (N. Y.) with their kind permission.

is, in a sense, not a "re-former." To be sure, Hans Castorp's generation, as others before and after him, atone for the inner disorderliness and decadence of a whole era by volunteering for war and dying a soldier's death. This is a way out, yet is does not create a new type of man or envisage a new way of life. It was left to two others besides Spengler to seek and to preach a new German type in the hour of crisis and collapse: the world-rover, Count Keyserling, and the poet-prophet, Stefan George.

To be sure, all of them, Mann included, foresaw and have witnessed the post-War psychic collapse, and recognized in it the bankruptcy of moral stamina as well as of something more profound: the German spirit had lost the vision of itself, and this alone could make the breakdown complete. What once was inner "form" and spirit had long since hardened into an empty pose, into mere pretense and formalism. The spirit of Kant, Frederick the Great, Fichte and Hegel, had waned. A force once sublime had turned into a farce, into dead conventionality. Thus the old German type was lost, and a new one was as yet unborn. To this, inner instability, the triumph of mere formlessness, bore witness.

No wonder the German spirit, as has always been its way, alternately turned recluse and went wandering abroad in order to recover itself. The representatives of those two ways are for us Stefan George and Keyserling. Have they been able to create a new German type? That the example of a single individual has the power to accomplish so gigantic a task was shown in the past by the life and work of Goethe; and for the last ten years we have witnessed another German type in the making.

Stefan George's awe-inspiring physiognomy blends the sublime Goethean brow with the stern and solemn features of Dante's fervent earnestness. Like Nietzsche, he dwells high above the precincts of the common crowd. Like Nietzsche and Goethe, he wishes to form, transform and ennoble the individual. *Sophrosyne,* true beauty of bearing and soul, is for him the manifestation of the divine in man. After Goethe and Nietzsche, he is indeed Germany's greatest and profoundest lyricist: accuser, negator and avenger of a thoroughly formless and materialistic age. A gleam of Hellenic beauty and perfection lies over his fastidious and exquisite art. In an earlier age George might have been the founder of a new cult, the prophet of a new creed. In our time he is but

the mentor of a formless generation in matters of moral culture and aesthetic taste. For in spite of his ardor for a new humanity through individual perfection, George's medium and art are far too individualistic and exclusive to reach beyond the narrow circle of a few elect among the intellectuals. Even the most ardent devotion of his disciples has not been able to alter this fact and to carry his message abroad.

The motto of Count Keyserling's *Travel Diary,* "the way to one's self is by digression around the world," may justly be regarded as the *Leitmotiv* of this unusually rich and ever-expanding life. Born a Baltic aristocrat of German stock, of considerable means and profound intellectual tradition, Keyserling enjoyed at once material independence and a cosmopolitan breadth of view. His journey around the world and the initial writing of his diary occurred before the first World War. When the Russian revolution deprived him of his ancestral estate, he turned to Germany, traveling, writing, and preaching a new faith. His School of Wisdom at Darmstadt was intended to be a focus of modern thought whence his gospel of a spiritual renaissance should flow.

With Spengler, Keyserling sees in Europe and America basically a single Western culture in contrast to the older cultures of the East. With Spengler, he holds that the forms of the past are dead and cannot be revived; that the narrow power-politics of the old-type national states have hastened Europe's spiritual decline; that we must look to the future instead of bewailing the past. Given by faith and temperament to seeing the positive and hopeful side of things, the Baltic sage differs essentially from the sceptical and deterministic views of Spengler as to the future course of Western civilization.

Of post-War Germany Keyserling had this to say: "Never before did a people in like circumstances bear so much future in itself." For the Germans are to him "the most virile, most promising people of Europe." As to the post-War German type and its future task, he remarks: "Now its task is to understand its mission correctly and to remodel its type accordingly. Since types are the creation of the spirit, such a remodeling is always possible; and Germans are particularly easy to remodel, since no other people is so easily influenced by ideas. If Germany remodels herself in accordance with the needs of the time, then her speedy rise is be-

yond all question. For she has before her a goal of such tremendous import, that all the experiences of the past pale before it."

As the German genius is predominantly aesthetic and creative, and not political, Germany's goal must be to create a new type of citizenship for a democratic and truly socialistic state; a type which is founded on a spirit of freedom, on a spirit which rises above class struggle and caste hate. It will be her task to pave the way to an era of a new international understanding, to a new solidarity and coöperation among the nations. Thus she will contribute her share to the moral reconstruction of Europe, to the progress of a new humanity.

Like Nietzsche before him, Keyserling holds that the old-type nationalism and imperialism are far too narrow for the future, that they must and will be overcome; that the present wars are but the crises of this transition, crises in which "all harmony, all understanding is abolished," in which "the unity of mankind seems to exist no longer." But this can be but temporary, for Keyserling adds at once:

> For me it continues. I see in this catastrophe only a crisis like many that have occurred already, if not of as wide a range, at any rate of the same significance; a crisis which does not cut short development, but quickens its progress. Just as all progress leads through periods of reaction, during which the lower and repressed impulses rise up and temporarily gain the victory, so it was to be expected that the more universal world of tomorrow would be introduced through a prelude of unprecedented national hatred, and that the future solidarity of nations would be preceded by wars of extermination; just so the era of peace which began with Augustus was initiated through the most cruel civil wars. During such crises humanity offers a revolting spectacle. In earlier days I should have turned away from it in disgust. To-day I can do so no longer: I know that in my innermost being I participate in it. Not that I am a party to it. For me the whole living creation is one single whole; I do not share a single one of the one-sided feelings which inspire the combatants. But I cannot dissociate myself any more from the whole, I cannot say, as formerly: *nescio vos.* For I know that I am one with the whole of my time, and to this extent I share in the responsibility for its fate.[2]

The keywords in this momentous passage are characteristic enough, indeed: "the universal world of tomorrow," "the future

[2] From the English translation published by Harcourt, Brace and Co. (N. Y.) with their kind permission.

solidarity of nations," preceded by "wars of extermination"! There follows the triumphant finale of this remarkable book:

> I anticipate a time when human power and courage will aspire no longer to temporarily limited but only to final and general aims. For the ideal of the future will not be distinguished by the fact that colorless sufferance will take the place of heroism, but that heroism will serve truth instead of error; that all earthly power will be directed throughout by the spirit of knowledge. Never will they cease to be effective as such. It is one and the same bravery which is evinced by the robber and the confessor of faith, and weakness remains weakness, whatever its cause may be. As long as heroism and wide-heartedness appear as inevitable opposites, humanity will not be ripe for universality. It is not ripe for it yet. In order that it may become so soon, those few in whom a profounder consciousness is alive to-day must never tire in proclaiming their knowledge. . . .

For himself, the rich harvest of Count Keyserling's journey is approximately this: Our age must come to realize that the peoples of this earth complement each other, and that no artificially created hatred can annul this fundamental fact. We Westerners must recognize the fact that our present formula of life impoverishes our souls; that physical superiority can endure only on a moral basis, and that all virtue begins with the individual and enlarges its circle from there; that the concepts of "progress" and "inner perfection" are irreconcilable opposites, since being is infinitely more important than performing; that the basis of all individual perfection is self-limitation and self-control, concentration, not infinite expansion. We must come to know that every act of violence is unjust, that true tolerance depends on inner culture. We must cultivate the faith that it is man's destiny to grow beyond himself, to found the kingdom of the spirit on earth. Here we Westerners must learn from the older and wiser East, for we are far too much people of action to be people of true understanding. Therefore our foremost goal must be a new spiritual equilibrium from which will come the moral reconstruction of the West.

It is one of the truly tragic turns in history that Germany has not been allowed to "remodel herself in accordance with the needs of the time." The present leaders of Germany have recognized only too well the fact that the Germans are particularly easy to remodel, though they have chosen a form which is utterly foreign to the old German type and to Germany's true vocation in history.

Thus it is apparent to-day that neither the formative vision of Spengler, nor that of Thomas Mann, George and Keyserling, has as yet sufficed to create the vision of a higher German type, no matter how heroic their individual efforts have been: they represent only symptoms of a temporary situation and of a new *striving* for form. In each the inner restlessness of the age is clearly reflected. Thus each of them marks a new stepping-stone in the progress towards a new German vision, none its fulfilment, though we may hope that this new vision will come.

Temporarily, Keyserling's vision of a new humanity and of the more universal world of tomorrow, Mann's dream of a new era of culture, freedom, universality of love, seem remote indeed. The world seems nearer to the realization of a perverted form of Spengler's last *imperium mundi,* and Germany's new leaders are striving to accomplish what her recent thinkers had failed to do: to create a new German type. Hermann Rauschning tells of this tragic turn from Athens to Sparta!

Yet the German type of the future, considering its psychological background in history, is certainly unthinkable as an inwardly unfree *condottiere,* or as a mere Spenglerian fatalistic realist; or as a mere restless rover between the ages and zones of this globe, in the manner of the high-minded Baltic Count; or as the over-individualistic, mystic recluse of the priest-like Stefan George who dedicates his soul to Eros and Kairos, beauty and solemnity. Spengler belittled man in the interest of dread historic facts. Keyserling's ideal of individual superiority expands and enhances man at the expense of historic reality. George's type, however, confronts forever a personal, and a merely personal, task. Yet he represents an inwardness and solemn contemplativeness which can hardly be lacking in the German type of the future, since it belongs to the best and most sacred tradition of the German mind.

To be sure, Spengler, Mann, George, and Keyserling, represent different though equally essential German sides and trends. The vision of each alone would never suffice. But the sum-total of their influence upon the German future seems of the utmost importance. For all four are searchers, pathfinders, and leaders on a weary way: on the return of the German spirit to its own true self.

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NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

THE COMMUNISM OF SAINT AMBROSE[1]

By Arthur O. Lovejoy

In no patristic writer is the persistent force of the classical tradition of primitivistic communism more evident than in St. Ambrose.[2] Though there is obviously no suggestion in the story in Genesis that, but for the Fall, private property would have remained unknown, Ambrose, by interpreting the story in the light of pagan conceptions of the Golden Age, confidently draws that inference—which, however, he seeks to support by suitable glosses upon scriptural texts. All things were made by the Creator to be held in common, and private ownership is contrary to nature; and when the mind of Ambrose is occupied with this theme he inclines to suggest that man's undoing was due to an initial act of cupidity, *prima avaritia;*[3] our first parents wanted to appropriate what did not belong to them. Thus he writes, *à propos* of the work of the fifth day of creation:

Hexaemeron, V, 1, 2 (*MPL*, XIV, 220):

Alas! Before man was, that seductive thing, abundance of wealth, which is the mother of our luxury, began to be; before man was, there were means of voluptuous enjoyment. Therefore that which was to tempt men was created before nature was. But nature is nowise at fault; she provided our

[1] The following is a section from an unpublished and uncompleted second volume of *A Documentary History of Primitivism and Related Ideas* by George Boas and A. O. Lovejoy, of which there is no present prospect of publication. The first volume, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity*, 1935, is hereafter referred to as *PA*. Translations are for the most part based upon the texts in Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, XIV–XVI, 1880. The communistic strain is, of course, apparent in other fourth-century, and earlier, patristic writers, notably in St. Basil, by whom Ambrose was greatly influenced; but none appears to have carried it so far as Ambrose, except in relation to the special case of the monastic societies.

[2] For modern accounts of St. Ambrose's views on property, see P. Ewald, *Einfluss der stoisch-ciceronianischen Moral auf die . . . Ethik bei Ambrosius*, 1881; O. Schilling: *Reichtum u. Eigentum in der altkirchlichen Literatur*, 1908, pp. 134 ff.; R. W. and A. J. Carlyle, *A History of Mediaeval Political Theory in the West*, 1903, I, pp. 136 ff.; J.-R. Palanque, *Saint Ambroise et l'Empire Romain*, 1933, pp. 336 ff.; P. H. Dudden, *Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, II, 545–550; R. Thamin, *St. Ambroise et la morale chrétienne*, 1895, pp. 278–292.

[3] More usually, however, Ambrose hesitated between two other opinions concerning the psychological cause of the Fall, which is by implication the chief permanent source of evil in man. Sometimes he conceives Adam's disobedience to have been due to ὕβρις (*superbia* or *insolentia*), e.g., *Epist.* 73, 5; *Expos. Ps.* 118, 7.9. In other passages he adheres to the view that the first sin was the desire for sensual pleasure, *appetentia voluptatis*, e.g., *Epist.* 63, 14.

nourishment, she did not prescribe our vices. She gave these things as common possessions, so that you might not claim any of them as your private property.

Presenting in the *De officiis ministrorum* a Christian revision of the ethics of Cicero, Ambrose presses home, as Cicero had not had the consistency to do, that philosopher's famous (but by no means original) declaration that "there is nothing that is private property by nature" and that "in human society community of rights to all things which nature has produced for the common use of all men is to be maintained."[4] Having enunciated this sweeping principle, Cicero had at once proceeded to hedge on it. Ambrose has no patience with such weakness; he finds it evident that private property originated simply through "usurpation." This great Doctor of the Church had thus virtually anticipated the dictum of the nineteenth-century French revolutionary: *la propriété, c'est le vol.*

De officiis ministrorum, I, XXVIII, 132, 137 (*MPL*, XVI, 67):

132. Some [philosophers] have thought the idea (*forma*) of justice to be that each should hold common, that is public, things as public, private things as his own.[5] But not even this is according to nature; for nature has poured forth all things to be held in common by all. For God commanded all things to be produced so that sustenance should be common to all, and that the earth should be a sort of common possession of all men. Nature therefore created a common right [to these things], usurpation created private right. . . .[6] 137. Who would not wish to hold fast to this supreme virtue,[7] if it were not that the original avarice weakened and deflected the force of so great a virtue? For so long as we eagerly strive to increase our riches, to accumulate money, to occupy lands as our possessions, to be distinguished for our wealth, we put away from us the essential nature of justice and lose the spirit of common beneficence. For how can a man be just who seeks to snatch from another what the other needs for himself?[8]

[4] *De officiis*, I, vii, 21 and I, xvi, 51. See *PA*, p. 258.

[5] The specific reference is evidently to the passage above cited (*De officiis*, I, xvi, 51); and in what follows Ambrose is directly attacking Cicero for drawing back, in the sequel, from the conclusion required by his premise.

[6] In the terminology of Roman law *usurpatio* could designate a lawful way of acquiring property; but it is clear from the context, and from Ambrose's general position, that he is here using the term in its bad sense. The expression is repeated in *De Nabuthe*, XII, 53: *quod commune est in omnium usum datum, tu solus usurpas.*

[7] I.e., justice, in the sense defined by Ambrose above.

[8] Ambrose repeats the substance of this in his *Exposition of Ps.* 118, 8, 22: "cum Dominus Deus noster hanc terram possessionem omnium hominum voluerit esse communem, et fructibus omnibus ministrare; sed avaritia possessionum iura distribuit": "Since the Lord our God wished this earth to be the common possession of all men and to furnish fruits for all; but avarice brought about a division of the rights of ownership" (*MPL*, XV, 1372). Ambrose even deduces a similar moral from the very name of man (in Latin!); for he supposes that the word *homo* comes

But to assert that "by nature," or in the state in which man was originally created and was meant to remain, all things were to have been possessed in common, did not, for a Christian theologian, necessarily imply that private ownership is not an inevitable accompaniment of man's present depraved condition. Some interpreters of Ambrose have accordingly represented his radically communistic account of the ideal state of nature as not intended by him to have any practical application to the society of his own time.[9] Though it is certainly true that he regarded that state as not recoverable in its entirety in this world, it is not true that the idea of it did not continue to inspire him to attacks upon the existing economic inequalities and to a persistent and violent denunciation of "the rich"—denunciation which was combined with pity, since cupidity, Ambrose constantly insists, while it robs the poor of necessities, brings only unhappiness to the wealthy. The following passage is from a treatise—perhaps originally written in the form of sermons—on the story of Naboth's vineyard.[10]

De Nabuthe Jezraelita, Ch. I, 2, Ch. II, 4, Ch. III, 11, Ch. V, 20 (*MPL*, XIV, 767–772):

How far, ye rich, will you carry your insane cupidity? . . . Why do you reject nature's partnership of goods, and claim possession of nature for yourselves? The earth was established to be in common for all, rich and poor; why do ye rich alone arrogate it to yourselves as your rightful property? Nature knows no rich, since she brings forth all men poor. For we are born without clothes and are brought forth without silver or gold. Naked she brings us to the light of day, and in want of food and covering and drink; and naked the earth receives back what she has brought forth, nor can she stretch men's tombs to cover their possessions. A narrow mound of turf is enough for rich and poor alike; and a bit of land of which the rich man when alive took no heed now takes in the whole of him. Nature makes no distinctions among us at our birth, and none at our death. All alike she creates us, all alike she seals us in the tomb. Who can tell the dead apart? Open up the graves, and, if you can, tell which was a rich man. . . .

But why do you think that, even while you live, you have abundance of all things? Rich man, you know not how poor you are, how destitute you would seem even to yourself, who call yourself wealthy. The more you have, the more you want; and whatever you may acquire, you nevertheless

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ab humo, the soil, "which deprives no one of anything but gives all things bounteously to all and pours forth her various fruits for the use of all living things. Therefore the special and household virtue of man is called humanity, which consists in sharing with one's fellows" (*De off. min.*, III, iii, 16; *MPL*, XVI, 158).

[9] So O. Schilling, *op. cit.*, p. 146: "Somit begegnet uns hier die Auffassung: Wie nun einmal die menschliche Natur, seitdem die *prima avaritia* hervortrat, beschaffen ist, muss Privateigentum bestehen als weniger ideale Institution gegenüber jener goldenen Zeit."

[10] I *Kings* xxi.

remain as needy as before. Avarice is inflamed by gain, not diminished by it. . . .

You crave possessions not so much for their utility to yourself, as because you want to exclude others from them. You are more concerned with despoiling the poor than with your own advantage. You think yourself injured if a poor man possesses anything which you consider a suitable belonging for a rich man; whatever belongs to others you look upon as something of which you are deprived. Why do you delight in what to nature are losses? The world, which you few rich men try to keep for yourselves, was created for all men. For not alone the soil, but the very heaven, the air, the sea, are claimed for the use of the few rich. . . . Do the angels in heaven, think you, have their separate regions of space, as you divide up the earth by fixed boundaries? . . .

How many men are killed to procure the means of your enjoyment! A deadly thing is your greed, and deadly your luxury. One man falls to death from a roof, in order that you may have your big granaries. Another tumbles from the top of a high tree while seeking for certain kinds of grapes, so that you may have the right sort of wine for your banquet. Another is drowned in the sea while making sure that fish or oysters shall not be lacking on your table. Another is frozen to death while tracking hares or trying to catch birds with traps. Another is beaten to death before your eyes, if he chances to have displeased you, and your very viands are bespattered with his blood. . . .[11]

Such utterances—in another age and from another mouth—would fairly certainly have been described by prosperous conservatives as "incendiary"—as would, still more certainly, the following from the same writing.

De Nabuthe, XIII, 56 (*MPL,* XIV, 784):

Do you think your great halls (*atria*) exalt you—when they ought rather to cause you remorse because, though they are big enough to take in multitudes, they shut out the voice of the poor? Though, indeed, nothing is gained by your hearing their voice if, when you hear it, you do nothing about it. In fine, does not your very dwelling-place admonish you of your shame, in that in building it you wished to show that your riches surpass [those of others]—and yet you do not succeed? You cover walls, but you leave men bare. Naked they cry out before your house, and you heed them not: a naked man cries out, but you are busy considering what sort of marbles you will have to cover your floors. A poor man asks for money, and does not get it; a human being begs for bread, and your horse champs a golden bit. You gratify yourself with costly ornaments, while other men go without food. How great a judgment, O rich man, do you draw down upon yourself! The people go hungry, and you close your granaries; the people weep, and you turn your finger-ring about. Unhappy man, who have

[11] This theme of the cost of luxury in human labor, suffering, and even death, had been a favorite one of the Cynic moralists; cf., e.g., *PA,* pp. 142–143.

the power but not the will to save so many souls from death: the cost of the jewel in your ring would have sufficed to save the lives of a whole people.

Some of the prosperous class in Ambrose's day, as in some later times, seem to have piously argued that the poor must, after all, be to blame for their own indigence, since God permits it, and that it would therefore be contrary to the divine will to share one's goods with them. To this Ambrose replies with warm indignation.

De Nabuthe, VIII, 40 (*MPL*, XIV, 778):

Perhaps you will say, as you are commonly accustomed to say: We ought not to give to a man upon whom God has wished the curse of poverty to rest. But the poor are not cursed when it is written: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." It is not of the poor man but of the rich that the Scripture says: "He that withholdeth corn shall be cursed." Moreover, you are not to ask what each man's deserts are. Mercy is not ordinarily held to consist in pronouncing judgment on another man's deserts, but in relieving his necessities; in giving aid to the poor, not in inquiring how good they are. For it is written: "Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the poor and needy."[12] Who is it that understands concerning them? He who has compassion on them, who bears in mind that sharing is the way of nature (*consortem esse naturae*), who remembers that God made both the poor man and the rich, who knows that he sanctifies his own produce who gives some portion of it to the poor.

What is still more noteworthy in Ambrose is that he anticipated one of the principal economic criticisms directed by modern Socialists against the competitive system of production and distribution. His explicit reference, it is true, is to "the acquisitive man" (*avarus*) rather than to the acquisitive society, but his attack upon the former is in effect a condemnation of the latter; and it is based upon the distinction between "production for profit" and "production for use" and upon the assumption that the profit-motive tends to restriction of the total product. The seller's interest, he observes, lies in high prices; these presuppose limitation of the supply of goods offered for sale and, if possible, monopoly of the market. But the interest of the community as a whole requires that as much be produced as can be consumed. Hence the profit-seeker's interest, Ambrose argues, is directly opposed to the public interest—which is to say that it is opposed to the purpose of God. The argument is, of course, the stronger for Ambrose because he is thinking of the profiteering speculator in grain, oil, and other necessaries, and of the great landowner, the exploiter of the natural resources of the soil, which was created by God. Though the factory-system had flourished on a considerable scale in some industries in the first century and must have still existed on a reduced scale in the fourth, Ambrose can not be said

[12] *Ps.* xli, 1: *Beatus qui intelligit super egenum et pauperem.*

to have been much aware of either the economic or the moral problems pertinent to manufacturing industry. He is unacquainted with the modern concept of capital in the sense of artificial instruments of production which might be held to be the product of the savings or the labor of the owner; and he has little to say about the equities of the employer-employee relationship. Though there is a brief conventional injunction (*Epist.* XIX, 3) against defrauding the hired laborer (*mercenarius*) of his *merces debita*, there is no suggestion as to how a "due wage" is to be determined. Ambrose's chief concern, in short, is for the "poor man" simply as consumer, not as laborer or participant in the productive process; and it is with this preoccupation that he attacks the profit-motive and the system of production which is controlled by it.[13a]

De Nabuthe, VII, 35, 37 (*MPL*, XIV, 776–777):

35. The avaricious man is always the loser by abundant harvests, since low prices of food-stuffs beat down [his gains].[13] To mankind in general it is fertility that is advantageous; only to the avaricious man is sterility profitable. He is better pleased with high prices than with abundant commodities; and he prefers to have something of which he is the sole vendor, rather than something which he must sell along with [i.e., in competition with] all the other vendors. Look at him!—fearful lest a surplus of grain should accumulate and the excess which the storehouses cannot hold should be handed over to the needy, and the poor thus get a chance of some benefit. The rich man claims the products of the earth for his own not because he wants to use them himself but in order that he may deny them to others.[14a] . . .

[13a] Lending money at interest, however, as well as profit-seeking, falls under Ambrose's condemnation; almost the whole of the *De Tobia* is devoted to this theme. (Ed. with translation and commentary by Lois M. Zucker, Catholic University of America, Patristic Series, Washington, 1933.)

[13] The text of the majority of the *mss.* here—*vilitatem alimoniae calculatur*—is manifestly corrupt. The translation is based on the reading *vilitate alimoniae calcatur*, which is found in some *mss.*

[14a] The idea here may have already been something of a commonplace. It had been fairly clearly expressed in Diocletian's edict of 301 A.D., fixing a ceiling for prices and wages. So long as prices are not regulated, says Diocletian, the injurious effects of "the unbridled lust for plunder . . . are not mitigated even by abundant stocks or plentiful harvests," for "the men who are engaged in this sort of business . . . reckon it a loss to themselves when abundance comes through the moderation of the weather." Such men are "constantly scheming to confine even the gifts of the gods to their own profit, and to restrict the prosperity of the public." Though "individually possessing riches so great and overflowing that they would suffice for whole peoples, they seek to acquire other men's property also, and hunt after ruinous rates" (the reference is clearly to rates of profit rather than of interest). The purpose of his edict, Diocletian declares, is to put an end to the avarice of such men. (Text ed. by Elsa R. Graser in Tenney Frank's *Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, V, p. 313; see also Frank F. Abbott, *The Common People of Ancient*

37. What, again, will you do if your product still further increases next year? You should then destroy again the warehouses which you are now preparing to build, and build bigger. For the reason why God has given you fruitful harvests is that He might thereby either overcome your avarice or condemn it; wherefore you can have no excuse. But you keep for yourself what He wished to be produced through you for the benefit of many—nay, rather, you rob even yourself of it, since you would better preserve it for yourself if you distributed it to others.

It is sufficiently evident from these texts that St. Ambrose was no merely conventional preacher of the virtue of almsgiving, exhorting the rich to give to the poor as a way of laying up treasure in heaven. The otherworldly motive, though never long absent from his thought, was not decisive, when he dealt with these matters. He was zealous to bring about a better distribution of this world's goods; and his invectives against the rich were based less upon the ground that they lacked Christian charity than upon the ground that a social order marked by so great inequalities of economic condition was contrary to "natural" justice and an aberration from the normal order established at the beginning of human history. When a rich man gives to the poor he is not being generous; he is performing an act of restitution, returning to another what rightfully belongs to him (*de suo reddis*).[14] It is, however, also true that Ambrose apparently conceived of no other way of bringing about a return to what he considered the ideal order—in so far as any return to it could be hoped for at all—than by the voluntary action of individuals in "sharing" their unrightfully acquired wealth with their fellows, and by the extirpation, through moral suasion, of the acquisitive motive (*avaritia*), the lust to possess more than others, from men's bosoms. His invectives, it would appear, were intended to arouse the consciences of the rich but not to excite insurgency among the poor. Thus, though he saw in communism not only the ideal which would have been realized in Eden if men had remained in their original innocence, but also (and for that reason) the ideal which ought to be realized in the Roman Empire of the fourth century, he proposed no coercive program for its realization. The approach to it in practice he apparently conceived to lie in the exercise of the influence of the Church, and especially of its preachers, in persuading the affluent to give away the excess of their possessions to the needy. Concretely, then, the only means to a more equitable distribution

Rome, pp. 145–178). This attempt to fix maximum prices by law, it will be remembered, proved a disastrous failure, according to Lactantius, writing less than 15 years later: "The scarcity grew much worse, until . . . the law was repealed from mere necessity" (cf. Abbott, *op. cit.*, p. 177).

[14] *De Nabuthe*, VII, 53; *MPL*, XIV, 783: Non de tuo largiris pauperi, sed de tuo reddis . . . Omnium est terra, non divitum . . . Debitum igitur reddis, non largiris indebitum.

suggested by Ambrose was, after all, almsgiving—but almsgiving on a grand scale, and as an obligatory act of justice, not of pity or self-complacent benevolence.[15]

As has been intimated, Ambrose combines, and in some degree confuses, with his denunciation of inequality of wealth the familiar thesis of cultural, and especially of Cynic, primitivism, that wealth is in itself an evil to its possessor. "Belongings," beyond the bare necessaries of life, are nothing but a burden; the man who has them really belongs to them, and not they to him. "The Prophet rightly speaks of men of wealth and not of the wealth of men,[16] in order to show that such men are not the possessors of wealth but are possessed by it. For a possession ought to belong to its possessor, and not the possessor to the possession. Whoever, therefore, does not use his patrimony as a possession, who fails to give to the poor, is the slave and not the master of his property."[17]

Ambrose does not, meanwhile, fail to warn the poor of the moral dangers peculiar to their condition; but even when he starts upon this topic he soon passes to that of the danger of having too much, denies that wealth is any ground for pride, and suggests, in the spirit of moderate primitivism, that the best society would be one in which all possessed a sufficiency and none superfluity.

Hexaemeron, VI, 53 (*MPL*, XIV, 280):

53. Take heed, then, ye poor, take heed, ye rich, that there are temptations in both poverty and riches. It is for this reason that the Wise Man

[15] So in the sequel of the passage already cited from *In Ps.* 118 *Expos.*, 8 22: "Justum est igitur ut si aliquid tibi privatum vindicas, quod generi humano, immo omnibus animantibus in commune collatum est, saltem aliquid inde pauperibus aspergas: ut quibus iuris tui consortium debes, his alimenta non deneges": "It is therefore just that, if you claim something as your private property, which was conferred in common upon the human race, nay, upon all living beings, you should distribute at least some of it to the poor; so that you may not deny sustenance to those to whom you owe a share in your right" (*MPL*, XV, 1372). Commenting on the story of Zacchaeus (*Luke* xix, 1–11) Ambrose admits that "criminality is not inherent in the possession of means (*facultates*), but in not knowing how to use them. . . . To good men they may be aids to virtue." But they become such only by being given away. "The rich Zacchaeus," as the Gospel itself declared, "was undoubtedly saved (*electus a Christo*), but by giving half his goods to the poor and restoring fourfold whatever he had wrongfully (*fraude*) taken from any man" (*Expos. Evang. sec. Luc.*, VIII, 85; *MPL*, XV, 1791). Cf. also *De Nabuthe*, XIII, 13.55: Doubtless the Scripture asserts that a rich may *may* be *sine macula* (*Ecclesiasticus* xxxi, 8), provided he "does not go astray after gold nor place his hope in treasures of money"; but such a one, Ambrose observes, is a great rarity.

[16] *Omnes viri divitiarum; Ps.* 75, 6.

[17] *De Nabuthe*, XV, 63.

says: "Give me neither poverty nor riches."[18] And the reason why he made this his prayer the same passage tells us; for it is enough for a man to have what is sufficient for him. But riches, just as they overload the belly with viands, overload the mind with cares and anxieties. Therefore he asks only that there be granted to him what is needful and sufficient; "lest I be full and become a liar, and say, Who seeth me; or lest I be poor and become a thief, and swear falsely in the name of the Lord."[19] We must, then, avoid and flee from the temptations of the world, so that the poor man may not become desperate nor the rich man insolent. For it is written: "When thou shalt have driven out the nations and shalt begin to enjoy their lands, thou shalt not say: My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth."[20] So is he who ascribes his riches to his own merit, and therefore, like a man who fancies himself to have already passed his test, knows not his own error, and drags sin after him by a long rope. For if a man will believe that making money is only a matter either of luck or of low cunning, he will have no occasion for self-glorification; for where one of these is concerned [i.e., luck] there exists no need for labor and no ground for praise; and where the other [i.e., cunning] is concerned, there exists merely avarice unashamed, which does not understand where to set bounds to the quest of pleasure.

Primitivistic considerations, manifestly drawn from Cynic and Stoic sources, once more serve Ambrose's purpose when his concern is not to improve the lot of the poor but to console them and to inculcate patience. After all, he points out, the man who has small possessions lives more nearly the 'natural' life which the philosophers had extolled; and the best gifts of the Creator are incapable of appropriation by the rich. These considerations are, however, supplemented by reminders of biblical teachings concerning the equality of all men before God, the extreme difficulty, approaching impossibility, of the salvation of the rich, and the compensations in another world which will redress the inequalities of this. The two somewhat incongruous strains are curiously interwoven in the following passage:

Hexaemeron, VI, 8, 52 (*MPL*, XIV, 279–280):

Take heed, O poor man, that if your flesh is mortal, your soul is precious and everlasting. If you lack money, you do not lack grace; and if you have no spacious house nor wide acres, the heavens spread above you, the earth is free. The elements are given to all in common, and the things that adorn the world lie open equally to rich and poor. Are the gilded ceilings of the costliest houses more beautiful than the face of heaven studded with glittering stars? Are the estates of rich men wider than the open spaces of the earth? Wherefore it is said to those who join house to house and field to

[18] *Proverbs* xxx, 8.

[19] *Ibid.*, xxx, 9; the Latin version used by Ambrose here differs considerably from the A. and R. V.

[20] *Deuteronomy* viii, 17; the beginning of the quotation is not exact.

field: "Will you dwell alone in the midst of the land?[21] You, O poor man, have a greater house, in which you cry out and shall be heard: "O Israel," says the prophet, "how great is the house of God and how vast is the place of his possession. It is great and hath no end; it is high and immense."[22] The house of God is common to rich and poor; yet it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. But you [poor man], perhaps, take it ill that you have no gold-plated lamps to give you light; yet the moon spreads abroad for you a far more resplendent illumination. You complain, it may be, of the cold, because not for you are there any sweating-chambers filled with steam from roaring fires; but you have the heat of the sun, which warms the whole earth for you and in the winter protects you from the cold. Do you think those happy who are attended by troops of obsequious servitors? But those who have need of other men's feet do not know how to use their own. . . . You consider it a luxury to lie on ivory beds, and do not consider how much greater a luxury is the earth, that spreads for the poor man beds of grass whereon there is sweet repose and gentle slumber, which he who stretches himself out in a golden bedstead seeks the whole night through and does not find. Oh how much happier does he think you, sleeping while he lies wakeful! I pass over what is much more important—that the righteous man who endures poverty here will enjoy abundance there, and that he who has been heavy-burdened with toil here will have his recompense there, whereas he who has received his good things here cannot hope to have them restored to him there. For poverty saves up its wages for the future, wealth consumes them in the present.[23]

In the end, of course, for Ambrose as for any consistent adherent of his faith, all earthly goods are overshadowed by otherworldly values; and when this side of his doctrine is dominant in his thought, material things and natural pleasures become not only worthless, but impediments to the soul in its progress towards its true felicity. "Nothing is useful, except that which is of service towards the life eternal; not that which serves for delectation in the present life. We recognize no advantages in wealth and possessions, but consider them disadvantages, unless they are rejected, and are reckoned rather as a burden when they come than as a loss when they are surrendered."[24] In Ambrose himself, however, this ultimate otherwordly strain appears never to have quenched the passion for what seemed to him distributive justice in terrestrial society.

The most significant fact concerning this side of the teaching of St.

[21] *Isaiah* v, 8.

[22] *Baruch*, iii, 24, 25.

[23] I.e., in this present world. Echoes of Seneca's *Epist.* XC are recognizable throughout the passage (cf. *PA*, pp. 264–274, and especially pp. 271 and 273–4. For the same strain in Cynicism, cf. *PA*, pp. 143–5).

[24] *De off. min.*, I, IX, 28, adopting at the end the reading: *eaque oneri cum veniunt magis existimantur quam dispendio cum erogantur.*

Ambrose is that so little came of it. The most powerful and most popular figure in the Latin Church through two critical decades, he played a large part in determining the direction which it was to take in theology, in its ecclesiastical polity, its liturgy, and its relations to the secular authority. But his preaching of a virtually equalitarian and communistic ideal of a Christian society had no effect commensurate with its earnestness and eloquence. To the reflective historian, this negative fact calls for an attempt at explanation; but such an attempt would require a longer discussion than is possible here.

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